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THE TIFTS of Georgia

Connecticut Yankees in King Cotton's Court

JOHN D. FAIR

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The Tifts of Georgia

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The Tifts of Georgia

Connecticut Yankees in King Cotton's Court

John D. Fair

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To Norma Kirk Patterson

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Preface

> I am a Yankee of the Yankees—and practical; yes, and nearly barren of sentiment. I suppose—or poetry, in other words.
>
> —Samuel Langhorne Clemens[1]

> Tift: Condition, plight humour; in Tift, in proper capacity for doing any-thing...to be in good order. It might be used to denote eagerness to engage in any business. —John Jamieson[2]

Albany and Tifton are names of cities buried deep in the heart of South Central and Southwestern Georgia. Few outsiders know much about the region. Lacking the rich cultural heritage of the coast and the dynamic growth of the Atlanta area, it is often overlooked in depictions of the Empire State of the South. Although Albany has served for many decades as the region's principal commercial and cultural hub, its economy has always had a largely agricultural base. Tifton also has thrived on agriculture and in more recent years has benefited as a way station for "snowbirds" trekking to Florida (with six interchanges on I-75). But few visitors tarry long enough to appreciate the natural beauty of the region's majestic pecan trees, its verdant grasslands, its lush tomatoes ripening on the vine, or the nostalgia evoked by its once dominant cotton fields. Farming, however necessary to survival and linked to otherwise romantic traditions of the Old South, has traditionally generated little significant income or interest. Southern Georgia, as one of the deepest sectors of the Deep South, has always struggled to become part of the economic and cultural mainstream of America.

To a considerable extent credit for this backwater region's development may be attributed to members of a family from Mystic, Connecticut, who migrated to Key West, Florida, set up commercial operations at various points along the east coast of the United States, and eventually made their way inland to the pristine wilderness of South Georgia. The most intrepid figure was Nelson Tift, a pioneer businessman who founded the city of Albany in the 1830s and played a major role on behalf of his adopted state during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Nelson's nephew, Henry

Harding Tift, founded Tifton and Tift County, and Tift College in Forsyth was named for his wife, a major benefactor. Later Tifts were not only involved in the continued development of Albany and Tifton but made significant contributions to the economy and civic life of Macon, Atlanta, and other communities. Wherever they settled, the Tifts usually carried with them Yankee values of thrift and hard work, a faith in progress through education, and a spirit of public service, but they were also obliged to reconcile their erstwhile Northern habits with the Southern culture that engulfed them.

This study of the Tifts of Georgia provides a glimpse of eight generations of this family from the late eighteenth to the early twenty-first centuries. Such an extensive time span presumes a genealogical foundation upon which an economic, social, and cultural superstructure for a historical monograph can be built. This process would have been very difficult, if not impossible, without the assistance of numerous individuals whose research has provided valuable information and insights on the family. Most critical in this regard is the compilation by Earl Burrows of *Robert Burrows and Descendants* (1974), which includes 111 pages of remarkably accurate details on the Tifts. It has provided a basic structure and reference guide for this study. Even more extensive is Timothy Nathan Tefft's *Record of Some of the Descendants of John Tefft* (2004), which lists nearly 4,500 Teffts, Tiffts, and Tifts, of which the Georgia branch occupies a modest segment. I am also indebted to numerous members of the Tift family and others who have graciously subjected themselves to interviews, some more than once: Willie Adams, Gil Barrett, Katie Blackburn, June Boyette, Mike Brumby, Margaret Brumby, Virginia Brumby, Lamar Clifton, Mary Frances Dixon, Virginia Ewald, Lucille Fagin, Ona Gilbert, Tommy Gregors, Jack Hall, Wilhelmina Hall, Susan Hine, Aimee Hodges, Harold Hudgens, Clara Bell Johnson, John Johnson, Paul Johnson, Frederick Jones III, Nelson Joyner, Paul Keenan, Ben Lawson, Mary Lawson, Erin Lones, Sue Lyons, Thomas Malone, Bee McCormack, Susan McGough, Marjorie Mitchell, Nelson Mitchell, Edward Oliver, Julia Oliver, William Oliver, Catherine Porter, Willie Mae Preston, C. B. Pritchett, Jr., Lutrelle Rankin, Lutrelle Rankin II, David Sherman, John Sherman, Betty Skinner, Anne Stokes, Amos Tift III, Ann Tift, Carol Tift, Dathan Tift, Jeannette Tift, Jerome Tift, Laurie Tift, Robert Tift, Serita Tift, Thomas N. Tift, Thomas W. Tift, Jr., William

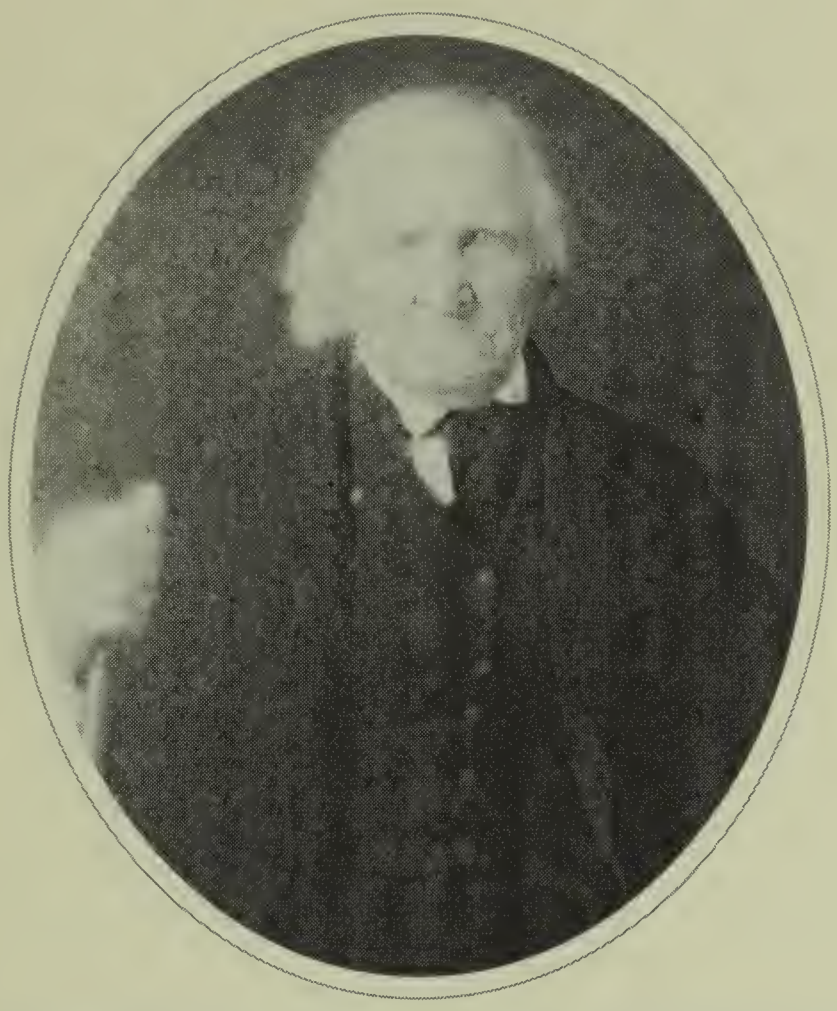
Tift, and Richard Winn. These individuals provided a wealth of information, furnished leads, and often reconciled contradictions.

I also gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Craig Anthony, Matthew Bailey, William Bragg, Robert Scott Davis, Stanley Deaton, Chuck Fahrer, Lee Formwalt, Bradley Hale, Keith Hardison, Tom Hombright, John Johnson, Amy Mimes, Sue Mims, Aaron Noble, Robert Page, Norma Patterson, Kathleen Shoemaker, Deborah Vess, David Williams, Mark Wetherington, Bob Wilson, and William Wise, all of whom supplied key elements to the Tift story. Foremost among those who provided material assistance are Catherine Tift Porter of Atlanta from the Tifton branch and David M. Sherman of Arlington, Virginia, from the Albany branch of the family. Both placed large amounts of primary sources at my disposal, generously shared their views as family insiders, and imparted valuable insights to a transplanted Yankee who is still trying to understand the fine points of Southern culture. Their interest, expertise, and guidance have been indispensable to this project.

---

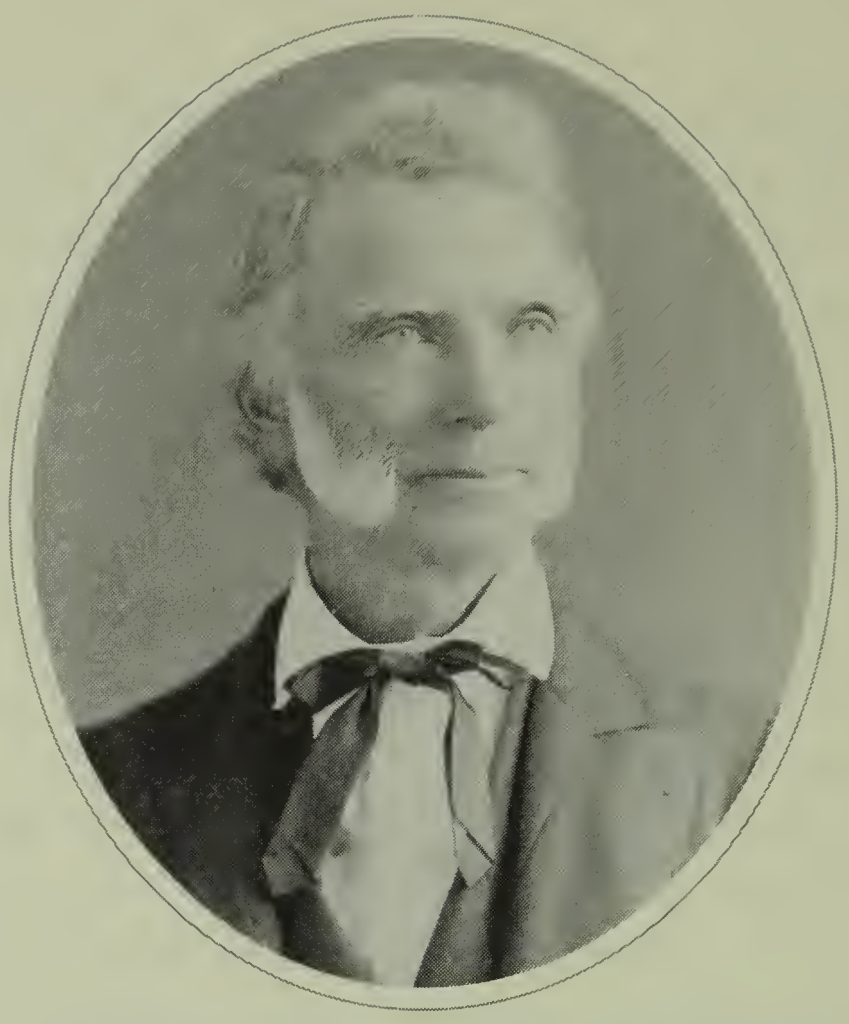
[1] Samuel Langhorne Clemens, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (New York: Norton, 1982) 8.

[2] John Jamieson, *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 4 vols. (Paisley, Scotland: A. Gardner, 1882) 4:574.



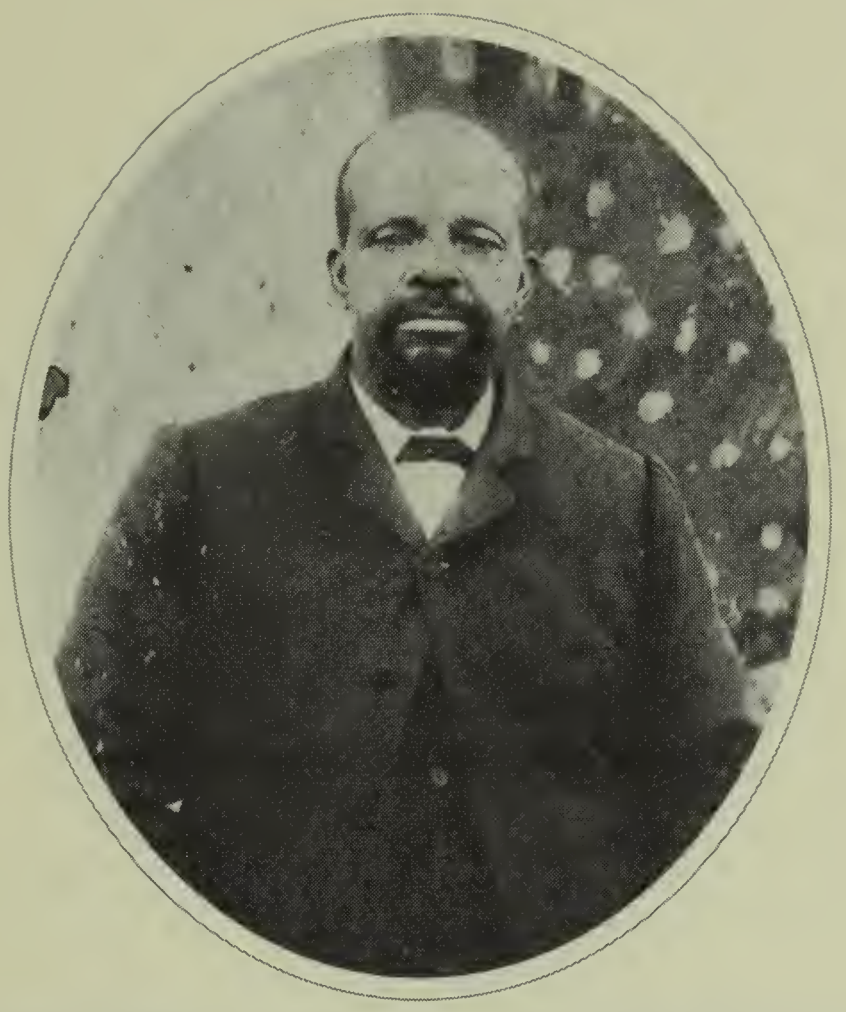
Solomon Tift: Family Patriarch (1758–1850) [Agrirama]

The Tift Homestead on 134 High Street in Mystic Connecticut
and first occupied by Amos Tift (1784–1829). [Personal Photo]



Nelson Tift: Founder of Albany (1810–1891)
[Catherine Tift Porter]

The Bridge House in Albany built by Nelson Tift in 1858.
[David Sherman]



Henry Hall: Former slave and overseer of Nelson Tift's dairy farm [Georgia Department of Archives and History]

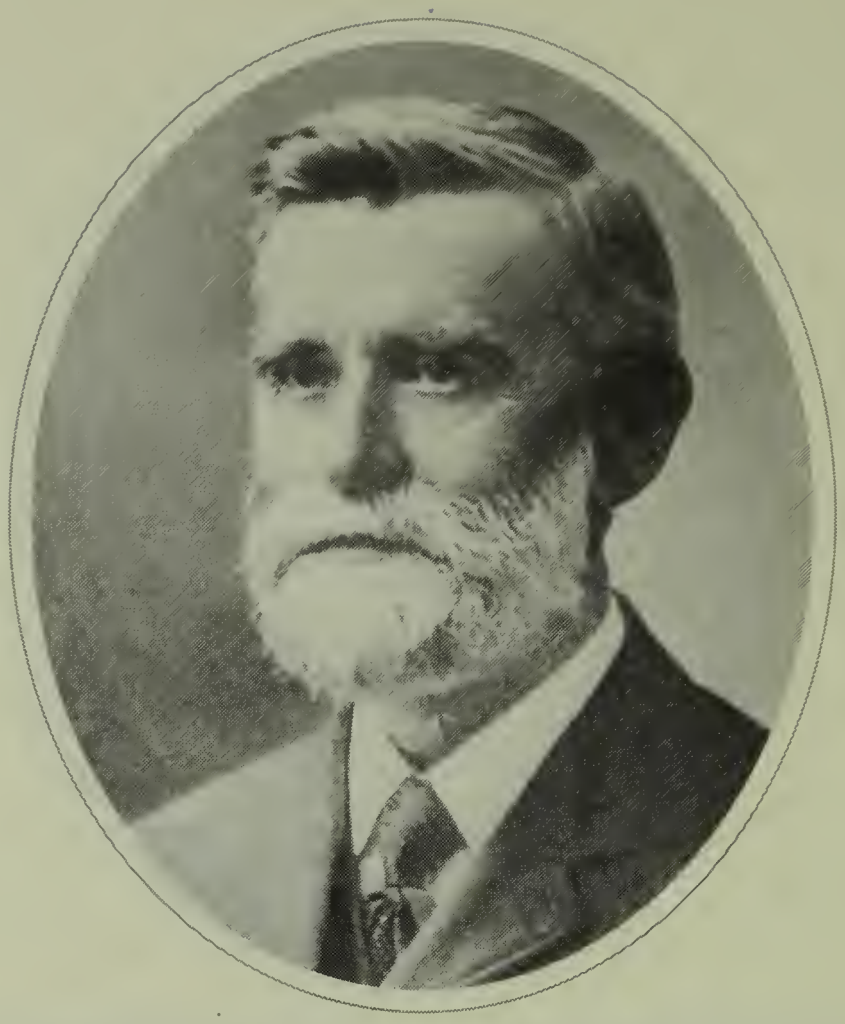
The Tift homestead on Society Street in Albany (circa 1890). [Ona McGough Gilbert]

Asa Forsythe Tift: Key West Merchant (1812–1889)
[Catherine Tift Porter]

Tift-Hemingway House on Whitehead Street in Key West built
by Asa Forsythe Tift (1812–1889) in the 1870s. [Andreas Lamecker]

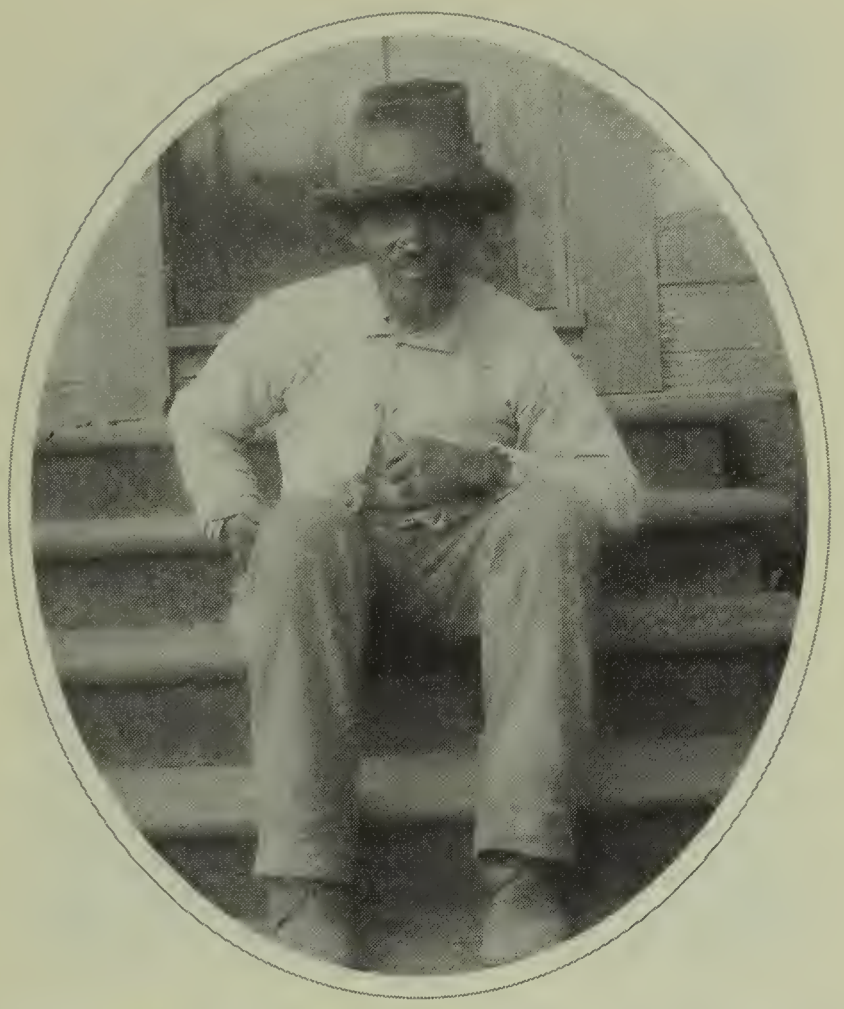
William Orville Tift: Son of Amos Chapman Tift (1843–1904)
[Agrirama]

The Family of Amos Chapman and Phebe Harding Tift (circa 1866–1867):
back row: Henry, Helen, Orville, Caroline, William Holmes (husband of Caroline),
and Eliza; front row: Edmund, Phebe, Annie, and Amos [Catherine Tift Porter]



Henry Harding Tift: Founder of Tifton (1841–1922)
[Catherine Tift Porter]

Henry Harding Tift's Rustic Cabin: Tifton's first house
(circa 1870s) [Catherine Tift Porter]



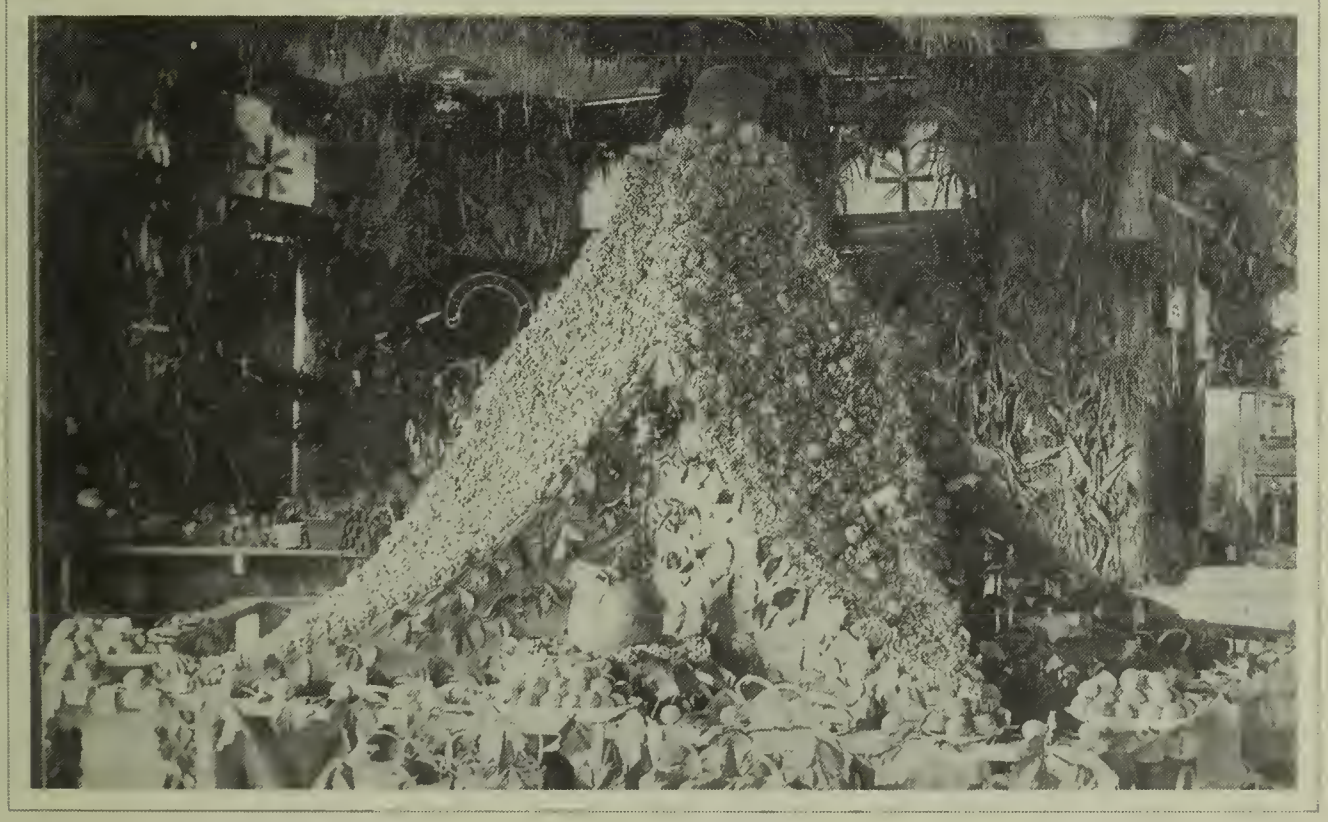
"Uncle Dan," who hauled freight from the train depot to H. H. Tift's store, on the steps to Henry's office at the saw mill (circa 1904). [Catherine Tift Porter]

Tift Sawmill, Tifton (circa 1900) [Catherine Tift Porter]

Bessie Willingham Tift: Wife of Henry Harding Tift and Family Matriarch (1860–1936) [Catherine Tift Porter]

The Tift-Willingham Homestead in Tifton (1887). [Agrirama]

Four Generatinos of Albany Tifts: Nelson Franklin (1847–1926), Maurice Wheeler (1869–1961), Asa Forsythe Tift (1896–1925), and Asa Forsythe Tift Jr. (1924–1984) [Jeanette Vandiviere Tift]



Mountain of fruit at the Empire Garden Midsummer Fair in the Tift Home (1893) [Catherine Tift Porter]

Thomas Willingham Tift (1889–1988): Second Son of Henry Harding Tift and president of Piedmont Cotton Mills
[Catherine Tift Porter]

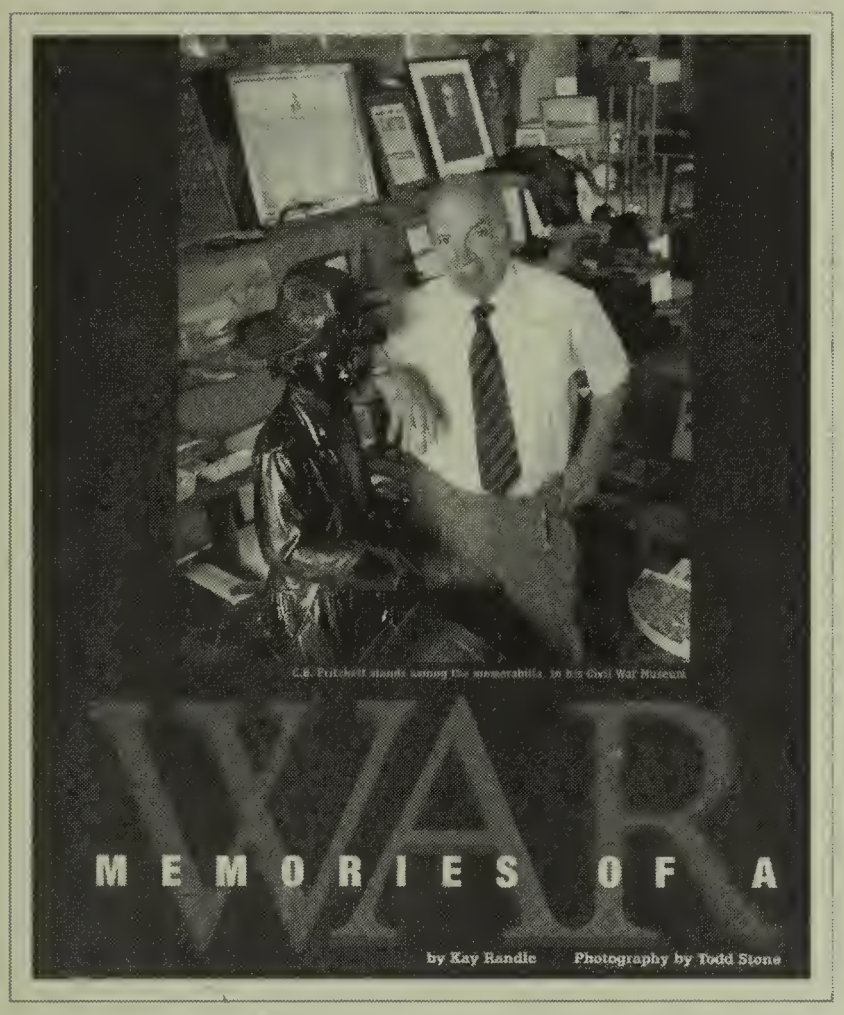
Tift-Rankin Wedding, New York City, 1944:
Christine (Tinky) Lee Tift (1917–2007), Lutrelle (Weetie) Tift Rankin (1919–2010),
Virginia (Presh) Tift Brumby (1915–2010),
and Catherine (Tee) Tift Porter (1922–) [Jerome Pound Tift]

Julia Smith Oliver: Great Granddaughter of Nelson Tift
and Alabama's first woman Cabinet Member (1926–2006)
[Edward Banks Oliver]

Henry Harding Tift III (Buster) and His Boys (circa 1952):
Thomas Nelson Tift (1951–), Jerome Pound Tift (1949–), William Lee Tift (1945–),
and Henry Harding Tift IV (1943–1997) [Jerome Pound Tift]

Susan Joyner Hine (1939–) and Virginia Joyner Ewald (1943–):
Great Great Granddaughters of Nelson Tift and
Re-Northernized Georgia Tifts [Personal Photo]

Black/White Reunion, Atlanta, 2003: L-R: Lucille Fagin,
Betsy Rumpp, Mary Frances Dixon, Albert Foster,
Lucy Mae Christian, and Ellen Bell, Lucille's Mother
[Ona McGough Gilbert]

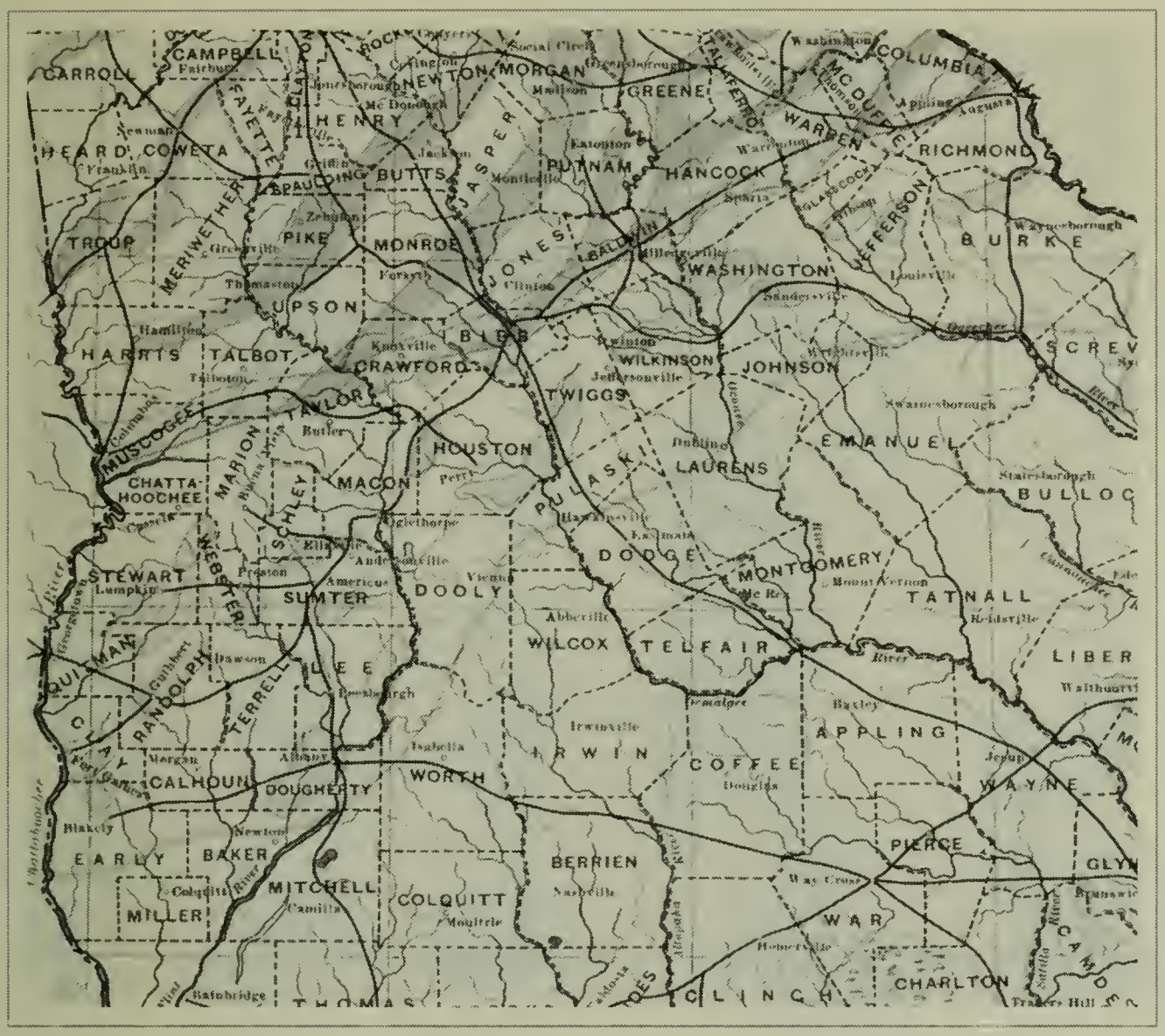


C. B. (Bunny) Pritchett Jr. (1925–2010): Great Great Grandson
of Nelson Tift and collector of Civil War memorabilia
[Albany Magazine]

Thomas Micajah (Mike) Brumby (1940–): Great Grandson
of Henry Harding Tift and promoter of tennis and reading
[TiftonScene Magazine]

Eighteenth Century Connecticut, Rhode Island and Long Island Sound [Library of Congress]

Key West, Florida, 1884, showing proximity to the Gulf [Library of Congress]



Detail. Georgia prior to the creation of Tift County from Berrien, Irwin, and Worth Counties [Georgia Department of Agriculture]

Albany, Georgia, 1885, showing proximity to the Flint River [Library of Congress]

TIFTON TIFTS

Third Generation

- Amos Chapman Tift 1808-1883 / m. Phebe Harding 1819-1901

Fourth Generation

- Henry Harding Tift 1841-1922 / m. Bessie Willingham 1860-1936
- W. Orville Tift 1843-1904 / m. Eliza R. Mallory 1846-1931
- Helen L. Tift 1848-1943 / m. Silas Beebe 1844-1927
- Edmund H. Tift 1853-1917 / m. Catherine Ransom 1853-1917
- Annie M. Tift 1863-1950 / m. Frank Buckley 1865-1946

Fifth Generation

- Henry H. Tift Jr. 1886-1929 / m. Virginia Pound 1893-1918
- Thomas W. Tift 1889-1988 / m. Catherine H. Terrell 1898-1984
- Amos C. Tift 1891-1956 / m. Lutrelle McLennan 1896-1966
- Orville M. Tift Jr. 1872-1934
- Katherine S. Tift 1878-1958 / m. Frederick Jones 1866-1937
- Carolyn Beebe 1873-1950 / Henry Whitehouse
- Katherine L. Tift 1883-1975 / m. Edwin H. Bacon 1882-1960

Sixth Generation

- Virginia Tift 1915- / m. Richard Brumby 1915-1989
- Henry H. Tift III 1917- / m. Christine Lee 1917-
- Catherine Tift 1922- / m. James Porter 1922-
- Thomas W. Tift Jr. 1927- / m. Clair Hardwick
- Lutrelle Tift 1919- / m. Homer Rankin
- Amos C. Tift Jr. 1921- / m. Doris Purvis
- David Harding Tift 1923-1979 / m. Marie Mires
- Sarah E. Bacon 1922- / m. William Skinner 1919-

Seventh Generation

- R. Gray Brumby Jr. 1940-
- T. Mike Brumby 1942- / m. Margaret Dimon b. 1956
- Henry H. Tift IV 1943 / m. Ann Brown
- William Tift 1945- / Sharon Follette
- Jerome P. Tift 1949- / m. Carol Patton
- Thomas N. Tift 1951- / m. Jana Schrum
- Joyce Tift 1942- / m. Arthur Davis
- Amos C. Tift III 1948- / m. Serita Chancey

ALBANY TIFTS

Third Generation

Nelson Tift
1810-1891
Annie Maria Mercer
1822-1895

Fourth Generation

Ann E. Tift
1839-1900
m. Charles Rawson
1827-1867

Nelson F. Tift
1847-1926
m. Susan Hall
1849-1917

Frances J. Tift
1844-1910
Thomas Nelson
d. 1864

Maria I. Tift
1849-1890
m. William E. Mitchell
1849-1893

Clara J. Tift
1852-1913
m. Thomas Woolfolk
1845-1922

Irene W. Tift
1856-1886
m. Walter Mann
1841-1915

James M. Tift
1859-1929
m. Julia Gilbert
1861-1930

Fifth Generation

Maurice W. Tift
1869-1961
m. Lula Wooten
1870-1944

Samuel H. Tift
1873-1941
1) m. Allatia Westbrook
1877-1917
2) m. Ona Gryder
1889-

Nelson Tift
1880-1944
m. Mary Carter
1891-1982

Julia H. Tift
1882-1966
m. Edmund Joyner
1878-1964

Irene M. Tift
1889-
m. Frances Smith
1891-1940

William Mitchell Jr.
1875-1952
m. Mary Goodyear
1879-1960

Nelson T. Mitchell
b. 1880
Lulu Mathews

Susan Mann
1878-1924
m. Washington Gibbs
1872-1913

Sixth Generation

Asa F. Tift
1896-1925
m. Vera Inman
1899-

David M. Sherman
1906-
m. Ernestine Walker
1909-

Susan G. Tift
1921-
m. Henry McGough
b. 1920

Robert H. Tift
1927-
m. Virginia Massey
1926-

Susan T. Smith
1914-1969
m. Woodrow Brooks
b. 1913

Amee W. Smith
1917-
m. Harry Jennings
1915-1946

Julia J. Smith
1926-2006
m. John Oliver
b. 1921

Isabel Gibbs
1900-1973
m. Carl B. Pritchett
1889-

Richard A. Tift
1901-1988
m. Elizabeth McKenzie
b. 1903-

Nelson T. Joyner
1908-
Virginia Mount
1910-

Nelson T. Mitchell
1922-
m. Marjorie Miller
1925-

Seventh Generation

Asa F. Tift
1924-1984
m. Jeanette Vandiviere
1926-

Ona T. McGough
1942-
m. Robert Gilbert
1942-

Nelson T. Joyner
1937-
m. Suzanne Wernstrom
1944-

Susan M. Joyner
1939-
m. Charles Hine
1937-

Virginia W. Joyner
1943-
m. Mark Ewald

Carl B. Pritchett Jr.
1925-
Anna White

David M. Sherman
1943-

John M. Sherman
1945-
m. Marian Chambless

Sue S. Brooks
1935-
m. Mark Lyons III
1934-

NEW ENGLAND / KEY WEST TIFTS

First Generation

Solomon Tift
1758-1852
m. Eunice Burrows
1760-1828

Second Generation

Joseph B. Tift
b. 1782

Amos Tift
1784-1829
m. Hannah Forsythe
1785-1878

Solomon Tift
1786-1860
Mary Ann Fairwell
d. 1822

Abbyline Tift
1806-1901
Nicholas Starr
1801-1867

Third Generation

Amos Chapman Tift
1808-1883
m. Phebe Harding
1819-1901

Nelson Tift
1810-1891
m. Annie Maria Mercer
1822-1895

Asa F. Tift
1812-1889
m. Annie Wheeler
1830-1854

Lucius Tift
1813-1866

Julius Tift
1818-1856
m. Catherine Noyes
1827-1911

Charles Tift
1818-1856
m. Julia Ann Ward
1827-1911

Frances A. Tift
1825-1906
m. Daniel Pynchon
1816-1871

Ann K. Tift
1827-1894
m. George Mallory
1824-1884

Introduction

> "Latham, I don't know what to tell you," he said in a comforting New England twang, "I've been here five years and I don't understand Southerners. All I know is, there's a family tree under every bush. They lie here on my couch and tell me so much about their ancestors that I never hear about what's troubling *them*."[1] —Florence King

The impact of immigration on the development of the United States would be difficult to overestimate, especially since virtually all Americans are descendants of emigrants from the Eurasian or African land masses. The effect of internal migration, on the other hand, has been far less appreciated and scrutinized, according to James Gregory, who labels it "one of the seri-ously underanalyzed issues of twentieth-century American historiography."[2] An assumption persists that once immigrants reached America's shores it was merely a question of assimilation or dissimilation to core values established by earlier settlers. Such sociological indices as conformity to Anglo-Saxon norms, the "melting pot" phenomenon, and cultural pluralism, however pertinent to racial, ethnic, and religious integration, lose their relevance when applied to inter-regional movements of peoples where cultural traits, based to a greater extent on environmental conditions, folk traditions, and economic pursuits, come into play.[3] At no point in American history has regional distinctiveness been more evident than between the North and South, leading George Tindall in 1976 to characterize Southerners as a separate ethnic group, shaped by

> a distinctive historical experience involving defeat and poverty; the climate and physical setting with their effects on life, tempo, emotion, and character; the presence of the Negro and his pervasive influence on the whole life of the region; the powerful religious heritage and the knowledge of good and evil; and finally, the persistence of an essentially rural culture with its neighborliness in human relations.

To Tindall this larger Southernism, though riddled by exceptions, was "an unquestionable reality."[4] While other scholars have dismissed many of the differences rooted in erstwhile notions of Yankee and Cavalier as myths,

even myths as William McNeill once recognized, are "often self-validating" and have the power to shape cultural identities and influence action.[5]

Traditionally perceptions of North and South have taken the form of static constructs of respective identities, conveniently reinforcing the concept of an antithetical "Other."[6] This tendency stemmed in part from the fact that the South was always the most native part of the United States and impervious to outside influences. In 1790, 81.3% of the white population of the South was of English, Scot, or Scotch-Irish stock as compared to 74.1% for the entire nation. As immigrants entered the United States in the early nineteenth century, notes Lewis Killian, the Southern white population became "more and more 'Old American.' The competition from slave labor, the monopoly of the best land by plantation owners, and the absence of flourishing industries discouraged new immigrants from drifting south from northern ports to seek their fortunes." Furthermore the South, unlike the rest of the nation, was unable to take advantage of the new wave of immigration after the Civil War.[7] In his 1882 assessment of the influence of the Irish, one of the most visible of America's newcomers, Philip Bagenal shows, on a color-coded map based on the 1870 census, deep bands of urban Irish settlements stretching from Maine into Pennsylvania and thence through the upper mid-West, but aside from a few pockets in Georgia and New Orleans there were almost no Irish living in the South.[8] Even concerted efforts by governments, railroads, and immigration associations to attract enterprising newcomers southward failed. "The flood tide of European immigration, in 1899–1910, swept past the South leaving it almost untouched and further isolating it in its peculiarities from the rest of the country," concludes C. Vann Woodward.[9] By 1936, notes sociologist Howard Odum, the Southeast, "exclusive of its Negroes," was the "most 'American'" of all regions.[10] It is hardly surprising that the South, agrarian by choice and isolated from more cosmopolitan influences, became renowned for its conservatism.

This hardening of identities converged on the Civil War, and there has been no lack of attention given to the dynamics of division between regions. An insightful study by Howard Floan takes a literary bent by analyzing the attitudes of more than a dozen antebellum authors from the North. He concludes that such writers as James Greenleaf Whittier, James Russell Lowell, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow adopted much the same view of slavery and the South as abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips. They essentially demonized the South. Since slavery was evil in the

eyes of Lowell and Whittier, they could easily blame it on the "wickedness of the men who were part of it, to trust the validity of their blackest assumptions about these men, and to apply one indictment to all Southerners. Theirs was a propaganda of hatred and fear." Other authors, such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Herman Melville, and James Fenimore Cooper, took a more benign view. The difference in their perspectives, according to Floan, lay chiefly in their familiarity with the South. The former group had "almost no awareness of the South and apparently no desire to learn more about it." To them it was a "cultural abstraction" equated with slavery, while for the latter writers, who had often traveled and lived in the region, a greater understanding and sympathy for the South existed.[11]

A similar categorization of Northern attitudes and identities is provided for the post-bellum period by Nina Silber, who concludes that regional antipathies, often infused with mythical constructs, were mitigated not only by living and travel experiences in the South but by intermarriage and the impact of a new wave of European immigrants to the North. "Especially in the 1890s, northerners were more inclined than ever to admit their own ignorance and to accept the authority of southern whites on racial matters." The racial dimension of this reunion is explored by David Blight, who shows how the age of Jim Crow was inaugurated by the Compromise of 1877 and the acceptance of a "new Southern policy" by the North. "A reconciliationist vision mixed with racism stood triumphant, ushering the emancipationist vision of the Civil War into an increasingly blurred past." This union of sectional hearts, contends Blight, was accomplished largely at the expense of the freedmen.[12]

An amelioration of the dichotomous relationship between regions also seemed possible through the interplay of demographic forces. In 1850 there were over 600,000 natives of slave states who had settled in the North. By 1930 this number swelled to about 3,800,000. Significantly, the number of Northerners migrating to the South was much less—a little over 200,000 in 1850 and about 400,000 by 1930.[13] But Southerners in Northern urban areas often invoked unfavorable connotations as "hillbillies" and "poor white trash," and Northerners who settled in the South, though higher in status, were usually labeled "Yankees" or "damn Yankees" with equally negative connotations.[14] Responses to cultural differences, real or imagined, of new settlers often took the form of fear and dismay. To Sheldon Hackney,

Southern identity was linked to a "siege mentality," based on the proposition that every significant change in Southern life had been "initiated by external powers." Since antebellum times Southerners felt the need to defend themselves against such evils as "abolitionists, the Union Army, carpetbaggers, Wall Street and Pittsburgh, civil rights agitators, the federal government, feminism, socialism, trade-unionism, Darwinism, Communism, atheism, daylight-saving time, and other by-products of modernity."[15] While Yankees did not necessarily exhibit all of these perceived evils, they descended from a class and region that represented so many alien elements that Southerners always had to be wary of the influence of outsiders.

Until the 1960s, however, the influence of enterprising immigrants on Southern life, aside from a stream of pejorative popular references to their lack of decorum, had largely escaped notice of historians. Albert Bushnell Hart even concluded that they could be "ignored as a formative part of the South."[16] But in 1968 Fletcher Green, Kenan Professor at the University of North Carolina, contended in his Lamar Memorial Lectures at Mercer University that in the antebellum period "Yankees exerted an influence on Southern life far greater than is generally recognized." He provided ample evidence that their contributions in government, education, journalism, art, religion, agriculture, and industry were significant and "out of proportion to their numbers." Though Green's survey falls short of providing definitive personal traits, it subscribes to the general notion that Yankees, in contrast to their easygoing Southern brethren, were "thrifty, industrious, and ascetic" and liked to characterize themselves "in terms of dignity, civic values, and idealism." Although they could also be "hypocritical and mercenary," there is little evidence "that southerners were hostile to Northern settlers."[17] Yet adaptation to new and distinctive cultural norms was by no means limited to Northerners coming South. It has been a continuous feature of American life since the landing of the Pilgrims, implicit throughout the movement into Western lands, and it should have been no surprise that it was also applicable to the Southland.

When Green's largely empirical findings are subjected to quantitative scrutiny, some interesting patterns develop. Of the 202 Yankees who could be identified by origin, destination, and occupational pursuits, the greatest numbers came from Pennsylvania, settled in Georgia, and were engaged in education. Princeton, true to its reputation as the Northern university most connected to the South, was the institution most Yankee immigrants

attended. So extensive was their influence on education, Green notes, that "there was hardly an academy or college that was not sponsored by a Yankee who came to the South."

State of Origin	*State of Destination*	*Occupation*	*College Attended*
Pennsylvania—53	Georgia—34	Education—66	Princeton—23
Massachusetts—36	North Carolina—25	Government—41	Yale—17
New York—30	Virginia—23	Religion—37	Harvard—9
Connecticut—27	Texas—21	Journalism—22	Pennsylvania—8
New Jersey—20	Louisiana—18	Agriculture—12	Middlebury—5
Vermont—15	South Carolina—15	Industry—12	Brown—4
New Hamp.—9	Kentucky—15	Literature—9	Dartmouth—4
Maine—7	Alabama—12	Theater—3	Bowdoin—3
Rhode Island—3	Tennessee—12		Williams—2
Ohio—1	Maryland—9		Union—2
Indiana—1	Mississippi—7		Amherst—2
	Missouri—5		West Point—2
	Delaware—4		Rensselaer—2
	Arkansas—2		Others—19

A significant characteristic of transplanted Northerners, repeatedly noted by Green, was their commitment to Southern causes. Indeed forty-three Yankees displayed support for either slavery, secession, or the Confederacy, while only eight expressed opposition. Whatever other traits they might possess, it was their position on slavery that was most critical to the success of Northerners in the South after the 1830s. "Slavery was the key issue in the acceptance of the Yankee after the rise of the abolition crusade, and Northerners who resided in the South and opposed the institution were socially ostracized, persecuted, and driven from the South, while those who conformed to the Southern view of slavery were warmly welcomed and socially accepted." No less critical was the quality of their commitment. As newfound members of the educated elite, some fifty Yankees became generals in the Confederate Army and numerous others attained commissions.[18]

Scholars who followed Green's lead agreed substantially with his findings. Richard Current, a later Lamar lecturer, also recognizes the disproportionate number of Yankees in leadership roles in the Old South and their reluctance to promote Northern ways. "Instead, they accepted and endorsed,

or at any rate conformed to, the regional mores. Other newcomers from the North—those who persisted in criticizing slavery or the society based on it—were soon driven out." Like converts in general, notes Current, "Northern converts to the Southern cause often strove to outdo the birthright believers in exhibitions of faith."[19] Clement Eaton concludes that the reason Yankees were so prone to accept slavery was that "most of them were racists like the communities from which they came" and were therefore easily adaptable to Southern mores. But he stresses, as does Green, their "progressive influence on Southern life," especially in stimulating industrialization.[20] To John Egerton this intrusion and the reverse migration of Southerners to the North ultimately had a ruinous effect on both regions, leading by the twentieth century to the "Americanization of Dixie" and the "Southernization of America." The two regions seemed to be "imitating the worst in each other, exporting vices without importing virtues; there was no spiritual or cultural or social balance of payments." Unlike their Old South predecessors, New South Southerners embraced materialism rather than human values, and racism, formerly an ideology of the South, was becoming more prevalent in the North.[21]

Social scientist Lewis Killian classifies transplanted Yankees as marginal white Southerners whose place of origin and credentials for acceptance were always in doubt. This insecurity, along with latent racist tendencies, helps explain how Northerners so easily adapted to Southern ways. "One of the things the Yankee manager of a southern plant least wants is to get into a fight with the local population over race relations," Killian contends. Therefore, he "does not become a member of the NAACP or join a march protesting racial discrimination." He leans instead to the conservative side of white Southern opinion by joining the chamber of commerce, affiliating with a local church, and seeking membership in a civic club. "In Rome he not only does as the Romans do; he may even come to admire their customs." Lacking much exposure to blacks in the North, Southern Yankees often "get their first close-up view of poor, undereducated black people, particularly if they hire domestic servants. Their abstract notions of how black Americans should be treated quickly give way to approval of the traditional manner in which white southerners have dealt with...black southerners."[22] Other studies show that even other minorities in the South usually adopted the same means to social acceptance. Southern Jews, note Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson, showed "no ambivalence" in

their "acceptance of Negro bondage" before the Civil War. "Most either kept silent or gave wholehearted support to the southern ideology." And the Irish, according to David Gleeson, "virulently opposed any attack on the 'peculiar institution' and often contrasted the paternalism of slave-holders with the callousness of Anglo-Irish landlords." Indeed their support of African slavery was "vital to the tolerance extended to the Irish by native whites in the region."[23] For Catholics and Jews, according to Killian, "regional loyalty has been as important to them as it has been to their white Protestant neighbors." Indeed, sociological studies show that other white Southerners were a powerful reference group for them.[24]

While follow-up works by Current, Eaton, Egerton, and Killian corroborate the results of Green's seminal investigation of Yankees in the Old South, none makes any pretense of providing detailed descriptions of these transplants or an assessment of their impact over an extended period. Only several studies, all in the 1980s and focusing on the Civil War and Reconstruction eras, attempt to add flesh to the bones. Two of them deal with Yankees who sought to capitalize on the vulnerability of the South during Reconstruction. Lawrence Powell's searching study of 524 Northern planters of an estimated 20,000 to 50,000 who descended upon the South after the Civil War strongly supports other studies of Yankee transplants. Despite high hopes that ex-slaves could be used advantageously, they were sorely disappointed. It was unsettling "to discover that the freedmen, like other premodern people, were less than enthusiastic about the industrial work ethic and preferred the work rhythms of a different economy," thus driving many Southern Yankees into sharing the racist views of indigenous Southerners.

> It is one of the larger ironies of the northern emigration movement that predilections toward the southern point of view formed the quickest in those areas where Yankee immigrants were chiefly among their own kind. Along the lower Mississippi River and the South Atlantic seaboard the newcomers were so heavily concentrated that they could take their personal security for granted. ...It was as though the freedom of not having to worry constantly about southern enmity had permitted these newcomers to indulge fully their spite toward the freedmen and to feel, therefore, a certain amount of sympathy for the white southerners' determination to keep the South a white man's country.[25]

Even the notorious carpetbaggers were hardly anti-Southern in sentiment. Of the ten scrutinized by Richard Current, only two were visibly pro-black, while two others on the other end of the spectrum became "disillusioned conservatives," one even being "a fanatical Negrophobe."[26] Arguably the most interesting instance of cognitive dissonance was Richard James Arnold, whose dual life as a Southern planter and a Northern businessman is vividly described by Charles and Tess Hoffmann. When confronted by conflicting loyalties during the Civil War, he opposed secession, contributed to the support of Confederate troops from Bryan County, Georgia, and spent the duration of the conflict in Newport, Rhode Island, an enclave for Southern slave-owners.[27]

This examination of the Tifts most resembles the Hoffmann book inasmuch as it is a case study of an immigrant family that settled in the South but had deep-seated attachments to its Northern homeland. The major difference is that the present study comprehends eight generations, thereby imparting a longitudinal scope that rarely exists outside works of genealogists. It also differs conceptually from other works on the development of South Georgia by such scholars as Ann Patton Malone, Jerry W. DeVine, and Mark Worthington.[28] Emphasis is on a patriarchal class of individuals, or what Malone calls "entrepreneurial newcomers" who sought to transform a largely rural environment into a more urban and progressive social order. In other words, this study aims to put a more human face on the region's growth. The kind of capitalism introduced by these Yankee entrepreneurs, not unlike that of the Dixie industrial elites described by Douglas Flamming, "was not a throwback to the past but a manifestation of regional modernization."[29] Either as founders or as perpetuators of the family legacy, the Tifts, while melding into the fabric of Southern life, served as paternal agents for both plain white folk and the ubiquitous black underclass of their respective communities.

Within this context of paternalism the purpose of this investigation is three-fold. First and foremost, it is the history of a family of note—but only partially. Not only does it include just those generations most relevant to family experiences, chiefly in Georgia, but coverage is further limited to several dozen individuals. Otherwise the result would be an endless litany of names—hundreds in fact—devoid of meaning and incapable of interpretation except in a quantitative sense. This selectivity is based to some extent on significance. Obviously such notables as Nelson, Asa, and Henry Harding Tift, who were critical in establishing the family's fortunes and reputation,

must receive primary coverage, but others were influential too, as enterprising Yankees in the South, and deserve special treatment. Another category consists of less notable figures, chosen not so much because they were important but because they represent certain family types. Other Tifts, fewer in number, show up because they lend continuity to the story. But emphasis in all instances is to determine those factors that governed the assimilation or dissimilation of family members into Southern culture and the paternalistic role they fulfilled. Unlike other studies, which have focused on the plantation, the mill, or exclusively on race, this treatment of Tifts will embrace more broadly the concept of pedigree. It is a family biography, chiefly within the contexts of Albany and Tifton.[30]

Another purpose of this study is to integrate the experience of the Tifts with the culture of the land they left behind and the development of the region they helped pioneer. This process has been aided immensely by the diligent spadework carried out by other researchers. The New England component owes much to the compilations of Earl Burrows and Timothy Tefft, Craig Anthony's narrative of *The Tefft Family and the Narragansett Controversy*, and James Baughman's study of *The Mallorys of Mystic*.[31] An understanding of the wrecking industry and life in nineteenth-century Key West was aided by John Viele's *The Florida Keys*.[32] In Georgia the main branches of Tifts were informed by two early accounts, *History and Reminiscences of Dougherty County* by the Thronateeska Chapter of the DAR and the *History of Tift County* by Ida Belle Williams. Though not without errors and biases, both are richly endowed with primary source material that would have otherwise been lost to posterity.[33] By far the most important printed primary source for early Southwest Georgia is Susan O'Donovan's annotated edition of the Nelson Tift diaries in successive issues of *The Journal of Southwest Georgia History*. Finally, *The Velvet Glove* by Mary Jackman provides critical insights into the paternalistic role performed by generations of Tifts.[34]

A final objective of this study is to analyze and assess the Tift family's presence in terms of regional and cultural identity. In this respect all previous works touching on the role of Yankees in the South are relevant and serve as building blocks, first by signifying that such a group existed in substantial numbers, that it displayed a progressive and distinctive lifestyle, and that its members occupied positions of prominence. More broadly this study addresses questions of continuity and change raised in seminal works by

Wilbur J. Cash and C. Vann Woodward on the New South, albeit mindful of James Cobb's caveat that such explorations must be done "with great care lest they be trampled by the galloping ghostly cavalrymen used by Cash to symbolize planter-inspired continuity or crushed by the bourgeois-piloted bulldozers that for Woodward served as the vehicles of change."[35] Underlying these terms of reference lay the critical question of what impact these Northerners had on the development of the South, which depends greatly on the extent to which they, antithetically, were blended into the culture of the region. This case study of the Tifts is designed to illuminate this integration first by examining their derivations in New England, then by identifying the constructs they were able to establish in Florida and Georgia, and finally by highlighting their continuing influence and dispersal in the state and region. Typically cultural integration studies have focused on ethnic, religious, and racial groups, but in the South family relationships have always been a critical factor to social identification and acceptance. As Ellington White observes, "the family has transcended all other interests and affections in the South. It acts as a bridge linking the Southerner to his past."[36] What follows is the story of how an industrious Yankee family over multiple generations helped to transform the South and how and under what circumstances it was transformed by the South.

It begins in Connecticut, the most characteristically Yankee part of the North. Here between 1730 and 1756, the colony's population increased from about 38,000 to 130,611, and by the meeting of the First Continental Congress in 1774 it numbered nearly 200,000 souls. This astonishing growth came about chiefly from natural causes, a high birth rate and large families, rather than immigration. With the closing of Connecticut's last frontier in the Northwest, Litchfield County, settlers were increasingly relegated to farming marginal lands and to overworking existing fields, resulting in soil depletion and less abundant crops. In addition to population pressure, according to state historian Albert Van Dusen, thousands of Connecticut Yankees were encouraged to seek "cheaper and more fertile lands on the frontier" by "heavy taxes, restricted commerce, poor markets, inadequate transportation, and growing mania for land speculation." The result was "an explosive emigration movement" in the late eighteenth century. In describing this process, Van Dusen identifies how "migrating Yankees" sought greener pastures northward to the Berkshires of Massachusetts, westward to New York and Connecticut's Western Reserve in Northeast

Ohio, southward to Mississippi, South Carolina, and Georgia, and eventually to Indiana, Illinois, and the Pacific.[37] By 1831, estimates Charles Andrews, this emigration of able-bodied Yankees was so widespread that one-third of United States senators and one-fourth of House of Representatives members had been born in Connecticut. Andrews further concludes that Connecticut, in its first half-century of statehood, proportionate to its size and population, "furnished more men and the ancestors of men that have played important parts in government, business, and education than did any other of the thirteen colonies."[38] Quantitatively at least the emigration estimates of Andrews bear a striking resemblance and synchronization with the reckonings of Fletcher Green. Especially considering its size, the Nutmeg State furnished a disproportionate number of immigrants to Georgia, which in absolute terms hosted more Yankees than any other state. But the emphasis of Andrews and Green alike is on quality, and in this index as well Andrews's emigrants match Green's immigrants. It is within this demographic context of quality and kind of migrants from Connecticut to the South that a study of the Tifts can begin.

Part I

Derivations

1

New England Origins

Von day ven I was in de gallery of de House of Representatives, I held up von map of de Confederation in my hand. Der was von leetle spot dey called Connect-de-Coot. I found by de Constitution he was entitled to six of his boys to represent him on dat floor. But ven I make de acquaintance person*elle* of de member I find dat more dan tirty of de Representatives on dat floor was born in Connect-de-Coot. And den ven I was in de gallerie of the house of de Senat I find de Constitution permit Connect-de-Coot to send two of his boys to represent him in dat legislature. But once more...I find nine of de senator was born in Connect-de-Coot.... Ah, gentlemen, dat leetle yellow state you call Connect-de-Coot is one very great miracle to me.[1] —Alexis de Tocqueville

The Tifts of Georgia can be traced to some of the earliest settlers of New England. By one source the family name, originally as Tefft, is Saxon for "a piece of ground where there has been a house" and appears in colonial records variously as Teffe, Teft, Tefft, Tieft, Tifft, and Tift. The research of nineteenth-century clergyman Benjamin Tefft of Bangor, Maine, reveals a possible derivation from Thevet (pronounced "Tevay"), the name given to Protestant refugees who fled France in the late sixteenth century after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Another even more speculative account presumes Celtic roots—that the name Tift is derived from the Welsh Taffy or Taafe—and suggests further links with Old English gentry in Ireland during the thirteenth century. Other researchers have even attempted to establish a Tefft coat of arms, replete with armorial bearings and the motto "Ubique Fidelis" (everywhere faithful). That the name was "associated with the Germans and Dutch, and meant, 'descendant of Theudofrid' (Prince of Peace)," however, clearly conflicts with other accounts. Such romantic renderings must remain more a matter of conjecture than fact.[2] What can be ascertained is that the Tifts (as Teffts) came to North America from England.

As early as 1638 the name of William Tefft appears in colonial records. He settled in Boston as a tailor and died in 1648. His only child, Lydia, married a John Dibble. The Tefft name therefore was perpetuated by his brother John (circa 1614–1679), who had settled in southern Rhode Island by 1655.[3] John owned a seven-acre freehold in Portsmouth, just north of Newport, but he sold this plot in 1661 and acquired twenty acres across the Narragansett Bay on what came to be known as Tower Hill, a Tefft landmark. It was part of the new Pettaquamscutt purchase, witnessed by John, from the Narragansett Indians. Later he bought an additional 500-acre plot in an area that was to become South Kingstown, which extended south along the Chipuxet River to Worden Pond and bordered on the Great Swamp. In 1665 it became part of the larger territory officially designated as the "King's Province" after Charles II.[4] Not unlike his Georgia descendants, this early Tefft took advantage of bargain prices on lands newly acquired from native Americans to establish a legacy for future generations.

John and his wife, Mary, had four children. None were raised on these lands, but all benefited from the family's real estate wealth. Even before their father's death the sons, Samuel and Joshua, acquired halves of the 500-acre farm. Whatever status the family might have been accruing, however, was lessened by the tragic fate of Joshua, who became entangled in an Indian insurrection, known as King Philip's War, which culminated in the Great Swamp Fight in late 1675.[5] As Roger Williams, the colony's founder, explained to Massachusetts Governor John Leverett on 14 January 1676:

> This night I was requested by Cap. Fenner and other officers of our Towne [Providence], to take the Examination and Confescion of an English man who hath been with the Indians before and since the fight. His name is Joshua Tift [Tefft], and he was taken by Capt Fenner this day at an Indian howse halfe a mile from where Capt. Fenners howse (now burned) did stand.

The interrogation revealed that a party of Indians accosted Joshua on his farm and threatened him with death. He was able to survive only by promising to serve the Sachem for life. Tefft then served as a slave in a fort manned by 800 warriors for the next twenty-seven days. Whether he married a Wampanoag squaw, fired at his fellow countrymen, and was "a sad wretch" who "never heard a sermon but once this 14 years," as alleged by Captain James Oliver, seems doubtful, but it can be verified that he was

executed for treason on 18 January "by being hung, drawn and quartered, the only time that punishment method was meted out in Rhode Island."[6]

The most thorough account of this tragic event by Jill Lepore, employing race and gender analysis, concludes that Tefft was "unredeemable. For standing by while his 'master' shot at English soldiers, Joshua Tift [sic] was either a traitor or a slave; either way, he was no Englishman."[7] Tefft's case was also complicated by a territorial dispute over the Pettaquamscutt lands between Connecticut (then part of the United Colonies of New England) and Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations, and his guilt might be questioned on grounds that he had only a brief hearing conducted under the former's jurisdiction. His life thus depended on judgment by an adversarial tribunal. Most telling was the testimony of "a captive woman" after the Swamp Fight. According to Joseph Dudley, chaplain of the United Colonies army, she stated that the Narragansetts were in desperate straits—"that one of their sagamores was slain, and the powder spent, causing their retreat, and that they are in a distressed condition for food and houses," but "one Joshua Tift, an Englishman, is their encourager and conductor." After the execution James Quanapohit, an Indian spy for the United Colonies, confirmed this testimony. "The Narragansetts said that an Englishman one Joshua Tift was among them" at the battle and that "hee did them good service & kild & woonded 5 or 6 English in that fight & that before they wold trust him hee had kild a miller an English man at Narragansett, & brought his scalpe to them."[8] However guilty Tefft may have been, later research indicates that his conviction was invalid since high treason cases had to be tried before the Court of the King's Bench in England.[9] Though hardly unprecedented, it also seems curious that Joshua would have so readily renounced his culture and gone native.

He did, however, leave a three-year-old son named Peter, whose mother's life was no less tragic than his father's. Sarah Tefft is alleged to be the illegitimate offspring of John Greene, son of one of the colony's original settlers and a man of quality.[10] But she had a troubled youth, being convicted of fornication by the Rhode Island Court of Trials, for which her father had to pay a fine of forty shillings. In the meantime, she married Thomas Flounders, a shopkeeper in Wickford Plantation, in 1668. Flounders became embroiled in local controversies, and in 1670 killed another settler in a land dispute for which he was hanged.[11] Sarah, with her late husband's estate as dowry, then married Joshua Tefft but died of puerperal fever only two days

after their son's birth. That Sarah was also of Indian stock is possible, especially considering the special relationship Joshua later had with the Narragansetts. Indeed John Greene, like Thomas Jefferson and many landowners of the Old South, might have exploited the women of those occupying the lowest stratum of society. But there is no proof that Sarah was of mixed heritage or even the daughter of Greene. What can be ascertained is that Peter was raised by his uncle Samuel Tefft and that he eventually received a handsome property settlement.

This inheritance resulted from the death of John Tefft in 1679. John's homestead and original twenty acres in Kingstown passed to his elder daughter Mary, who had married a Samuel Wilson, thus relinquishing those properties to another family. Until peace returned to Pettaquamscutt, Joshua's brother Samuel had lived in Providence. He returned with his family and nephew Peter in the early 1680s to construct a house and resume farming on his South Kingstown lands. That his taxes increased from 3 shillings, 1 1/2 pence in 1679 to 9 shillings, 4 1/2 pence in 1687 signifies his increasing prosperity. In 1709 Samuel, with his oldest son John and Peter, extended the family holdings by taking part in the Shannock Purchase, Rhode Island's second largest colonial land dispensation. Tefft property thus extended all the way to Westerly in the vicinity of the disputed border with Connecticut. Samuel gained additional social standing through his marriage to Elizabeth Jenckes, whose brother Joseph subsequently served as the colony's governor (1727–1732).[12] By the time of his death in 1725 Samuel had accumulated a considerable estate, consisting of hundreds of acres of land, numerous buildings and appurtenances, and personal effects of nearly £950.[13]

Although Peter Tefft was not included in this inheritance, he was eligible to receive former Indian lands (the Shannock Purchase) made available after the 1703 boundary settlement between Rhode Island and Connecticut.[14] In 1709 Rhode Island commissioners granted 9,722 acres located in the old town of Westerly (now Richmond) to twenty-six proprietors. Three of them were Teffts, including Samuel, his eldest son John, and nephew Peter who secured two plots of thirty-six and 130 acres. But in 1716 Peter sold the latter and moved his family to a 150-acre property in Stonington, Connecticut. It was located just west of the Ashaway River, near the present town of Hopkinton, Rhode Island, and not far from Mystic, Connecticut.[15]

Peter's peregrinations are important in that he was the first of his family to stake a claim in Connecticut.

He and his offspring would continue moving back and forth across the state line for the next several generations. Six of Peter's eight children were born in Westerly, but his youngest son, Jonathan, was born in Stonington, and Peter eventually died there in 1719. Also his widow Mary remarried a Stonington man. Peter's property (administered by his uncle) was divided between his wife and children. The eldest son of Peter and Mary Tefft was named Samuel, born in Westerly on 24 February 1705. His whereabouts can be traced to both sides of the border—from Westerly to Stonington, Richmond, Groton, and North Lyme, to Voluntown, Connecticut, and finally to Situate, Rhode Island, where Samuel married Mary Ellis in 1730 and resided at least until 1749. Their youngest of four children was Joseph, born in Situate on 19 July 1738.[16]

The Tefft presence on the borderlands established by Peter and his descendants was reinforced by other branches of the family, most notably the offspring of his uncle Samuel, whose son John married Joanna Sprague and left a large estate worth over £6,100, including lands in South Kingstown and Westerly. Among their twelve children was a second son named Joseph, who was born in 1710 and married Esther Brownell in 1729. Most importantly, he inherited a house and land in the town of Richmond (a part of Westerly until 1747) where all of his children were born, thereby moving this branch of Teffts closer to Connecticut.[17] By this time the boundary was settled in favor of Rhode Island keeping its western lands. Undoubtedly claims established by the Teffts had much to do with this outcome, even to the extent, as Craig Anthony surmises, that "there would not be the state of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, as we know it today, were it not for the sacrifice and perseverance of the Tefft family."[18] But the trials and tribulations with Connecticut and the Indians also had an impact on the Teffts by impelling them westward and casting them as pioneers in new and untamed territories.

The next stage of the family's development leads to Connecticut, where the patriarch of the Georgia Tifts emerged in the late eighteenth century. Notwithstanding early associations with such social stigmas as illegitimacy, fornication, murder, and treason, Solomon Tefft (Tift) was able to establish a new beginning by marrying into a respectable Connecticut family. The conundrum faced by Tift descendants, however, has been an inability to

establish a firm connection between their founding father and his alleged parents, Joseph and Lucy (Brewster) Tefft.[19] There is no record of Solomon's birth, but there are two Joseph Teffts who could have been his father, one descended from Samuel's side and the other from Joshua through his son Peter. Joseph, Jr., son of Joseph and Esther (Brownell) and great-grandson of Samuel, seems the less likely. His marriage to Sarah Maxon in July 1757 yielded six offspring, none of whom was a Solomon.[20] The most likely connection stems from Peter Tefft's grandson, Joseph, if for no other reason, as Craig Anthony, Registrar of the Pettaquamscutt Historical Society and keen Tefftologist, observes, "he's the only one left!"[21]

<u>Joshua Tefft Branch</u>

John Tefft m. Mary Barber

¦

Joshua Tefft m. Sarah Greene-Flounders

¦

Peter Tefft m. Mary _____

¦

Samuel Tefft m. Mary Ellis

¦

Joseph Tefft m. Lucy Brewster?

Whether this Joseph ever married a Lucy Brewster and fathered a son named Solomon, however, remains questionable on three grounds. First, Solomon later testified that he was born on 28 May 1758 in South Kingstown where another branch of Teffts resided, not Peter's line in Situate and Westerly. Second, the nearest Lucy Brewster was a daughter of Jonathan Brewster and Lucy (Andruss) of Norwich, Connecticut, but she was married to a John Adarton. Finally, and most tellingly, this Lucy Brewster, born on 11 October 1751 would have been only six and a half at the time of Solomon's birth.[22]

Thus Solomon seems to have slipped through the cracks of Tefft descent. Not only does he not appear in any public records of his time, but there is no reference to parentage in his personal testimonials or statements.[23] Still there are other indications that Solomon had Tefft connections. His declaration that he was born in South Kingstown provides a starting point. Additionally, the steady movement of the progeny of John westward suggests

a further tie with the family, particularly in light of Solomon's eventual settlement in Southeast Connecticut. Indeed, Groton land records indicate the farm that Solomon and his wife Eunice (Burrows) occupied near the Poquonnoc River was originally deeded to Jonathan Brewster in 1650. Additionally, Daniel Tefft, a distant cousin, witnessed Solomon's Revolutionary War pension application in 1832. Finally, a selection of family forenames by Solomon and Eunice suggests Tefft as well as Burrows connections, especially for their first five children. Their eldest child Betsey was likely named after Eunice's mother, while their second child Joseph likely took the name of Solomon's father (there being no Josephs in the Burrows family), and Amos, their third child, was obviously named after Eunice's father. Solomon, the fourth child, presents a puzzle because though it is the father's name, there are no nearby Solomons in either family. One must go back to Elizabeth, daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth (Jenckes) Tefft, to find a Solomon. She married a Solomon Carpenter, and their son Solomon, born between 1703 and 1712, would have been a second cousin of Solomon Tift's father. Not until the seventh child of Solomon and Eunice does the name Lucy appear.[24] While none of these correlations solves the problem of Solomon's parentage, they suggest that the patriarch of the Georgia Tifts was a Tefft!

What is most evident with Solomon is a generational change signified not only by a geographic move but a name change—from Tefft to Tift. With Solomon being illiterate, his name had to be transposed from sound to writing. In most cases this was done by public officials who subjected what they heard to various constructions. While Solomon's surname appears alternately as Tefft, Tifft, and Tift in his military records from the Revolutionary War period, it is consistently spelled Tift at the time of his application for a pension in 1832.[25]

The earliest record of his service in the revolution indicates that Solomon was a private in a company from South Kingstown called the Kingstown Reds, commanded by Captain John Gardner, in May 1776. They were ordered to remain ready to serve "at a minutes warning" but were not to serve outside the state or to be "subject to any draft." Under these terms, Solomon attested to being called "various times" to guard against coastal raids from British vessels on Rhode Island. In 1777 his company was stationed at Point Judith for three months, followed by postings to Boston Neck and Tower Hill till "September when in consequence of the frequent landings,

and depredations from the enemys guard ship said Company was ordered to Rhode Islands South Ferry" till November."[26] Solomon's second term of service, which began in June 1778 in Captain Benjamin West's Company of Colonel John Topham's Regiment, was spent largely at Tiverton and seems slightly more eventful.[27] On 9 August 1778 his company

> crossed Howland's Ferry and landed on the Island of Rhode Island from whence they moved nearer to Newport and besieged the place with the intention of making an attack as soon as the French Fleet under D'Estuing should return, which had sailed from Newport on the appearance of the English fleet and then driven to sea by a gale. After the French fleet returned instead of aiding the American Army under Sullivan they shortly sailed for Boston, and General Sullivan was compelled to raise the siege. He [Solomon] was in the battle of the 29th of August wherein the American Army compelled the enemy to retreat, and the next day abandoned the island without loss.

Solomon's company then returned to Tiverton where he served mainly in a guard boat patrolling the northern end of Rhode Island (now Newport County) from Bristol to Howland's Ferry, "till his term of service expired in the spring of 1779."[28]

Solomon Tift's Revolutionary War record, as revealed from official documents and testimony taken under oath, is admirable but hardly heroic. It differs markedly from accounts perpetrated by his children and grandchildren over a century later in which he supposedly served time as an American privateer, participated in the Battle of Fort Griswold in September 1781, was captured and confined (twice!) to a British prison ship, and survived an attack of yellow fever. In 1881 his granddaughter, L. H. Starr, recalled visiting the fort as a little girl with Solomon. Grandpa

> told me where he stood in the fort very near Col [William] Ledyard when he was killed[,] heard the surrender[,] saw what followed & asked him if he got hurt[,] said *no* but a bullet grazed his right ear & took off a lock of his hair (he was taken prisoner by the British, carried to NY[,] kept in the hold of the vessel 6 weeks, without food excepting salt pork[,] just enough to keep him alive[,] his clothes being taken from him, at the end of that time he was exchanged for one of their men[,] came back to N London more dead than alive & he was not 21 years old at that time)[.][29]

Similarly Solomon's grandson Nelson recalled in 1881 his grandfather's story of suffering on the prison ship where "he contracted fever and narrowly escaped death." When he became "very ill of fever," his brother-in-law and a sister secured his release and brought him home to Poquonoc. Solomon told his descendants that "as he was being carried from the ship...he heard a British officer remark that the fellow was as good as dead, and Solomon Tift determined that he would not die." According to Nelson, he often shared these experiences with his young grandchildren. Once, in response to a question about whether he ever had meat to eat, he stated, "Oh, yes, my child, when an old horse or mule died we had some."[30]

However important such colorful tales might be to establishing the eminence of a family patriarch, they are at variance with the original terms of Solomon's service. Furthermore they do not coincide with the actual time and place of his Revolutionary War participation. It is hardly surprising that no mention is made of such important incidents as the Battle of Fort Griswold or imprisonment on a British ship in statements, taken under oath and in the presence of his cousin Daniel, a veteran of the revolution, especially with a lucrative $40 annual pension in the offing. They occurred over two years after his term of service had expired. Only to the eager ears of his grandchildren could these war stories be entrusted to posterity.[31]

What can be verified about Solomon Tift is that following his discharge from the army in March 1779, as the war was entering its final phase, he married Eunice Burrows in December 1779 at Groton, Connecticut. The presiding minister was Eunice's brother Silas, a Baptist. After residing near Poquonoc Bridge for about ten years, where their first five children were born, the Tifts purchased a lot from a Burrows relative, John Avery, near Fort Hill in Groton where Eunice's parents lived. Here the remaining eight children were born, and Solomon was inducted into the Second Baptist Church in 1809, four years after the birth of their youngest, Abbyline. Although it is likely that the family was exposed to many Baptist and Puritan influences, the old social/religious order was yielding to more secularized Yankee values; there is no evidence that the Tifts were particularly spiritual.[32] Solomon died on 2 December 1852 at ninety-four, surviving his wife by twenty-four years. He spent his latter years with his daughter Eunice (Crumb) in Old Mystic.[33]

Virtually all the children of Solomon and Eunice who reached adulthood also enjoyed long lives. The youngest even lived into the twentieth

century. Ironically, the one to make the greatest mark, their third child, Amos, had the shortest life span. He was born on 18 May 1784 and raised at his parents' Fort Hill house, which he purchased from them in 1816 for $150. With his marriage to Hannah Forsythe of Preston thirteen days later, it became their family home. But only their eldest child, Amos Chapman Tift, was born there, the remaining twelve being born at four other residences. Their final home was in Mystic on the hill overlooking the harbor. By this time Amos's wanderlust on land became seaborne. Aside from Solomon's coastal patrol duties during the revolution and his son Joseph's alleged "heroic" service on the *USS Constitution* during the War of 1812, there was no family maritime tradition.[34]

Exactly when and why Amos took to the sea is uncertain, but these were propitious times in Southeastern Connecticut, and historians of Mystic's maritime history provide a context for his seafaring. The Mystic River was a tidewater estuary where deep water, level banks, and abundant timber from nearby forests made it an important harbor and shipbuilding center. "As early as the 1680's," observes James Baughman, "boats, sloops, shallops, and smacks were abuilding in the area," and by 1816 yards for larger vessels were operating. The twisting five-mile river, characterized by shelving bends and points, was ideal for shipbuilding. "At Noank were the Lathams and the Morgans. Near Portersville was the Packers' yards, and Benjamin Morrell was active at the Narrows. ...At the Head of the River were the Burrowses...and the Leedses," with master carpenters and launching sites for smaller vessels available at other points.[35] One of the career options for young Amos at sea was fishing. Government bounties encouraged the development of a cod and mackerel industry along the Atlantic coast, extending to the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. But eventually the Southern or winter fishing grounds became lucrative, according to William Peterson. Southern Connecticut fishermen would "winter off the Carolina and Florida coasts and sell their catches (red snapper, mullet, and grouper) to local merchants in the South (particularly Charleston and Savannah), in the Bahamas, or in Havana." Mystic fishermen became so active around Florida that many settled at Key West, becoming some of its first inhabitants.[36] Records from the Blunt White Library indicate that Amos was on board the Schooner *Amelia* in July 1801, engaged in the "fishing business" with Nathan Clift, scion of an enterprising Mystic family. Their operations extended at least as far as Savannah.[37]

The other possible career for Amos Tift was trade. Peterson notes that from about 1808 to 1825 the West Indies trade from New London County "saw a seemingly endless flow of horses, mules, oxen, poultry and 'country produce.'" Imports for home sale and larger markets in New York and Boston included salt, molasses, rum, coffee, and sugar from the Indies, flour and wheat from the South, and timber from Maine. That mercantile activities as well as fishing led Amos and many other Mystic men to Southern waters is a likely scenario, especially after the War of 1812 severely limited contacts with the Caribbean. He commanded the sloop *Jennette* (1808–1810), the sloop *Lawrence* (1816), the schooner *Native* (1825–1826), and the schooner *Lilly* (1828) and was part owner of all four vessels.[38] On 21 May 1828 Amos arrived in Charleston from Indian Key with turtles and a cargo of sugar, molasses, and lead salvaged from a ship headed from New Orleans to Baltimore that had grounded near the Tortugas. "Father was in business in Charleston," wrote his daughter Hannah. "I do not know whether he had been there before the war (1812)." But he was truly a man of the sea and "was called Capt. TIFT."[39]

Among the trials and tribulations of Amos's livelihood were long absences, physical discomfort, danger, and constant concerns for his family. In January 1818, by which time he had developed a profitable trade in Charleston, he heard from an associate, Asa Fish, that his year-old daughter Amanda had suffered a serious injury. Upon learning of her death, Amos, in his unschooled hand, expressed his sorrow to his wife.

> how Can i Express my trouble to the remaines of my Dear famualy, yesterday i received your letter which Containd the heaviest News & the most trouble that ever i met with o my Dear is it possible that i never Can Se that dear little babe again how little did i think when i left home that it was the last time i ever should Se my dear Amanda again in this world of trouble. how Can i reconcile My Self to Such a trouble & that i Could have Bin at home to have Seene the Remains and Bath its wounded Boddy with my tears But their is one Consolation we need not doubt it has left a world of trouble, forever to dwell with the lord, my dear Hannah do not let trouble over Come you So as to injure your health.

He also assured Hannah that his younger brother Solomon, who was trading in Charleston, was well. His own business, however, was "dull," owing mainly to "the verry Survear weather...it is Stormy Cold windy

weather the most of the time is the most disagreable weather i ever knew heare I have Cleared only about two hundred dollars yet[.]"[40] Later correspondence indicates that Amos was sending back installments of ten, twenty, and even forty dollars periodically to support his family.

Account summaries for a six-month period in 1823–1824 indicate that Amos was meeting his obligations. In payment for goods such as potatoes, tobacco, tea, vinegar, pork, sugar, and cigars purchased from the smack *Rainbow* and other obligations amounting to $211.92, he was able to draw $25.25 from his own cash reserves, $76.80 in debts owed to him by others, and $109.87 from the sale of 915 pounds of turtle meat at twelve cents a pound. The latter figure is significant as it indicates that Amos had likely developed a connection with turtling operations in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. By 1825 his sixteen-year-old son Amos Chapman had joined him, transporting cash and goods between New York and Charleston.[41] But his Charleston business simply served as a base for farther-reaching ventures along the coasts of Florida. The earliest extant document indicating his presence in Key West identifies him as "Amos Tift of Schr. Native of New London," hence justifying his appellation of "Captain."[42]

With the establishment of territorial government for Florida in 1819, the purchase of Key West by John Simonton of Mobile, and subsequent occupation of the island by the American Navy, commercial activity off the Keys increased. Fishing and turtling, catering to the Havana market, initially attracted settlers, but wrecking soon became their principal enterprise.[43] What made it possible was Key West's location along the Florida Strait, which separates it by nearly eighty miles from Cuba. The Keys are a chain of low islands extending in a crescent shape for about 145 miles. They are skirted on the south by the great reef, consisting of shoals, rocks, sand ledges, and coral, lying one to twenty feet under water and extending four to six miles offshore. The Gulf Stream, which begins just west of the Keys, runs northeast through the straits, increasing in velocity as the channel narrows. Most critical to shipping, however, is its strong counter-eddy that runs southwestwardly along the Florida reef. Dorothy Dodd explains that

> Vessels bound into the Gulf that were becalmed or had a master unacquainted with the direction of the eddy were almost certain to be piled up on the reef. Yet ships entering the Gulf hugged the Florida shore to avoid the Gulf Stream. Outward bound vessels likewise kept to the Florida shore, for the Florida reef was regarded as less perilous than the ironbound coasts of Cuba and the Bahamas. But the curved shape of the channel, which required continual changes of course, the strength and irregularity of the current, frequent gales, and inadequate lights and charts, all conspired, in pre-steam days, to make the navigation of the Straits so hazardous that, in 1849, the insurance rate on vessels bound into the Gulf of Mexico was the same as for those bound around the Horn to Valparaiso.[44]

As early as 1816, ships were wrecking on the reef at a rate of over one a month. By the 1850s it was nearly one a week. Salvage operations were hardly new in the early nineteenth century. They can be traced to English Puritans who settled in the Bahamas in the 1640s. Bahamian salvors out of New Providence dominated the trade until 1825 when the United States Congress passed a law that effectively excluded them. Thereafter the wrecking trade was taken over by Americans, mostly from Southeastern Connecticut.[45] For the next several decades it was virtually the only industry in South Florida, and Key West, a boom town, was the largest settlement in Florida.[46]

There is no evidence, however, that Amos Tift was a wrecker. Rather, two years after his arrival in 1824 he opened a dry goods store on Wall Street near the beach. From there, and from a wharf that he owned, Amos ran the *Lilly* to Charleston and New Orleans as a packet, but it also carried salvaged freight on the outward run and supplies homeward for the inhabitants of Key West. In 1827 he constructed a store that sold a variety of goods, including ginghams, silk dresses, shirts, shoes, hats, beef, potatoes, crackers, molasses, turpentine, boat wire, powder and shot, medicines, and liquors. Amos also advertised "Hard-Ware, Crockery, and Tin-Ware. For sale cheap for CASH."[47] His daughter's claim that he served as a judge cannot be verified, but his signature on territorial petitions to Congress marks him as a man of some social standing. Soon he was joined by his eldest sons, Amos Chapman, Nelson, and Asa Forsythe, born in 1808, 1810, and 1812, to assist with the business.[48] His younger brother Solomon also may have worked for Amos, but he likely embarked on a more independent course related directly to the

seaborne or wrecking trades. The 1850 federal census lists Solomon as a bar pilot, age sixty-four, with no property. Solomon was a widower, his wife, Mary Ann (Fairwell), having died in 1822 in Charleston. Territorial records also indicate that in 1827 Solomon had lawsuits of $1,000 and $900 pending for violations of revenue law.[49]

Solomon's legal problems, however, do not seem to have adversely affected his brother's successful business or reputation, and little more is heard of him until his death in 1860. Unfortunately, just when prospects for the future seemed so bright, Amos was stricken by disease in summer 1829, which was, according to Key West's first historian, "one of our yellow fever years."[50] William Marvin, who served as the island's district attorney and judge from 1835 to 1863, was afflicted shortly after he arrived on another one of those years. He concluded that "medical treatment of any kind was of no value to either arrest, modify, or cure, the disease. Whenever it was an epidemic, full one half of the adult patients died, and you could give no reason why the other *half* did *not* die too. Even good nursing did not seem to possess any great value."[51] Although Asa reported on 13 July that he was "recovering very fast," his condition took a turn for the worse. Hastily, Amos was brought back to Mystic where he died on 14 August 1829. His funeral was the first held in the nearly completed Mariners' Church on land he had donated. Amos was buried in Elm Grove Cemetery in what became the Tift plot.[52]

Despite his relatively short life, Amos, given his maritime, financial, and social achievements, is a more fitting patriarch for the Georgia Tifts than his father Solomon. Indeed Solomon (especially in light of questions concerning his lineage and military service) seems far less iconic. It is significant that later generations of his family, so fond of perpetuating names of progenitors, would cease to recognize Solomon, while the name of Amos was frequently adopted. Amos was far more enterprising than his father or any previous Tift. Not unlike his Yankee ancestors who moved westward through Rhode Island and Connecticut, he followed the frontier and had to adapt constantly to new surroundings. But the risks were far greater. Leaving familiar surroundings for a treacherous life at sea in his youth, he went on to carve out a career in merchandising and the carrying trade and to establish these operations nearly 1,500 miles from home. Most importantly, it was Amos who spearheaded his family's trajectory to the South. But for all of his

successful adaptations, Amos eventually succumbed to tropical disease, a disquieting feature of this new environment that lay beyond his control.

2

Mystic, Key West, and Georgia

> At the present time, the Southern Yankee is quite an institution in the South. Although he has sprung up in the last fifty years, he has thriven faster than Jonah's gourd, has waxed fat exceedingly, and already elevates his horn amazingly high in the land. He flourishes like a green bay-tree in every Southern State. ...The best specimens of the genuine Southern Yankee, are to be met with in Georgia. In this State they grow to enormous sizes, and seldom stand under six feet in their stockings, often, indeed, reaching six feet and a half.[1] —D. R. Hundley

Beyond the business capital accrued by Amos Tift and his projection of family enterprises southward, his most important legacy was his sons, Amos Chapman, Nelson, and Asa. They too were men of vision, courage, energy, and ambition who carried their father's Yankee initiatives forward to later generations. Clearly, Amos Chapman, as the eldest and his father's executor, was now head of the family, and the business initially thrived under his guidance. With his marriage and return to Connecticut in 1840, Mystic reassumed its role as the family's home and center for commercial activity. Asa then took control of Key West operations, which expanded and prospered in ensuing decades. But the most significant development was the departure of Nelson soon after his father's death and his inception of business enterprises on the Georgia frontier where family fortunes reached unprecedented heights. Thus by the outbreak of the Civil War, the Tifts seemed equally drawn to three distinct and diverse geographical areas.

Under the supervision of Amos Chapman, the family business in Key West carried much the same merchandise as before Amos's death, and it appeared to be no less profitable.[2] The younger Amos was also a good citizen who sought opportunities for civic involvement. Territorial records indicate that he served on a superior court grand jury for the Southern district and that he and his brothers petitioned Congress on such subjects as the establishment of a city government, navigational improvements, territorial

integrity for the Keys, and a proposal to make Key West a port of entry.[3] Amos also served as an election official, ran for Monroe County Clerk, and was a founder of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, being on a committee authorized to engage a clergyman, erect a church, procure a charter, and transact congregational business.[4] Other Key West Tifts would follow Amos Chapman as communicants at St. Paul's, thus departing from the family's earlier Baptist leanings, but there is no evidence that religion held any special significance in their lives.

Of utmost importance to them was business, and there were many uncertainties to challenge their wits and survival skills. The elder Amos had succumbed to one of them. Another was the vicissitudes of the merchant and shipping trade on which their livelihood depended. Though far removed from the mainland, Key West was a site of considerable commercial traffic. According to custom house data, the value of domestic imports to the island averaged $83,561 yearly between 1831 and 1834, over 75% of the total for the entire Florida territory, and foreign imports added another $80,880 per annum.[5]

	1831	1832	1833	1834
Domestic Imports	$96,371	$67,481	$69,070	$101,323
Foreign Imports	$67,863	$108,778	$39,024	$107,856
	$164,234	$176,259	$108,094	$209,179

No less impressive is John Viele's estimate that duties collected at Key West between 1823 and 1828 were "ten times higher than those of all other Florida ports."[6] These unmistakable signs of prosperity were offset by the duties themselves, which raised prices and reduced profits. A further handicap for merchants was the double freight fees they often had to pay for ships passing between New Orleans and Charleston or New York to stop at Key West.[7] While the Tifts no doubt benefited from owning their own craft, thereby avoiding freight charges and earning haulage fees, it was also a liability in terms of operating costs, labor, repairs, depreciation, and risk. It is impossible to know how much money the Tifts were making, but it is certain that these enterprising young businessmen were always looking for opportunities to make more.

By far the greatest incentive for the intense commercial activity at Key West was wrecking. "You will naturally enquire how we live," wrote a local lawyer to a relative in 1838, "and the reply is very simple, in, by and through

wrecks—If we are not directly interested in the business, our support wholly comes from it. Stop that and we cease to live."[8] No doubt the Tift brothers desired a greater share in this lucrative trade, but there were scant profits to be had in wrecking itself. Although salvage awards for 1835 totaled $88,435 and salvaged goods fetched $183,643 on the open market, the *Key West Inquirer* estimated that in proportion to capital invested, danger incurred, and difficulty of the work, wreckers were "not deriving a greater income than any portion of the community engaged in the usual avocations of mercantile life." While wreck awards were usually sufficient to cover crew and maintenance costs, it was the uncertainties of the business that caused so much distress. For an individual wrecker

> month after month, nay, a year may elapse and not a solitary case occur in which the services of *his* vessel may be available. In the mean while, what capital he possesses is exhausted,—debts are incurred,—and anxiety comes over him, barring him from all enjoyment by day or night, and he sees poverty and distress, threatening him in the distance, which perseverance and industry can alone avert.

A final problem was that underwriters were unwilling to insure vessels "at any rate," thereby depriving owners of any safeguards on their investment.[9] Viele reckons that few wrecking vessels or captains remained operational for more than three years.[10]

It is hardly surprising that the Tifts, with the likely exception of Solomon, Jr., avoided such risks. There was a sector of the wrecking industry, however, that was far more lucrative and safe, and the brothers were ideally positioned, as retail merchants and shippers, to be involved in it. Those merchants designated to serve as business agents for salvaged cargoes received a 5% commission on the first $5,000, 2.5% on the balance, and another 1.5% on the cost of reshipment. Of those connected with the wrecking trade, estimates Viele, it was the merchants, acting as business agents who "stood to gain most," and in 1839 only four of them owned wharves. In addition to commissions, they

> earned fees for mooring the salvaged vessel at their wharves, for offloading and hauling the cargo to their warehouses, and for storing and reloading cargo. If they purchased cargo at an auction, they normally made a profit on its resale. Outfitting, provisioning, upkeep, and repair of the wrecking craft

were other sources of income for Key West merchants, ship chandlers, and dockyards.

One such merchant, William Curry, arrived from the Bahamas as a teenager to work as an office boy. He eventually became Key West's first citizen and Florida's first millionaire, a pre-Horatio Alger success story. This small group of business agents "who owned the wharfs and warehouses" were, according to Viele, "the chief beneficiaries of the wrecking business," and they were "determined not to let any newcomers siphon off any of their profits."[11]

How then did the Tifts gain access to this charmed circle? It certainly helped that their father had arrived early on the island, that they were already well established in commerce, and that they had developed the right social connections. But the key to their advancement was the purchase by A. C. Tift & Co. of some prime real estate along the seafront from Fielding Browne and William Whitehead in 1837. Browne was a fellow merchant originally from Virginia, and Whitehead was one of Key West's earliest settlers who surveyed the city in 1829. Both were communicants with Amos Chapman at St. Paul's church. In the next four years the Tifts constructed the North Building, now the city's oldest commercial structure, and a cistern behind it adjacent to Wall Street and Mallory Square.[12] Their major stake to a claim in the island's principal source of income was confirmed in 1838 when Governor R. K. Call named Amos Chapman as one of six auctioneers for Monroe County, thereby giving him a direct hand in the trade.[13] At least a dozen times in the late 1830s Charles Mallory of Mystic, founder of Mallory shipping lines, bought salvaged goods at auction through the Tifts for resale in New York by Mystic-born merchant James D. Fish.[14] "We gave them credit and bought their supplies," Fish said of his Key West contacts. "They took advantage of these auctions and consigned their purchases to us to sell for their account, often at a very large profit."[15] The Tifts thus gained in several ways through the wrecking trade—from commissions as business agents for Mallory/Fish, warehousing services, and from purchase of goods for transport and resale in their own craft.

Meanwhile Amos Chapman (hereafter Amos) was a bachelor turning thirty, and there were few eligible females in this wilderness environment. It was likely during one of his visits to Mystic that he fell in love with Phebe Harding, daughter of Henry and Phebe Harding of Old Mystic. Henry was a

respected businessman who operated a general store and the Mystic Manufacturing Co., which produced cotton and woolen goods. He was also public-spirited, being elected selectman in 1823 and 1848 and a state representative in the 1840s.[16] The family seemed a perfect match for the business and civic-minded Amos, whose marriage to Phebe Harding took place on 11 September 1839. As "first amongst your friends," future Florida Senator Stephen Mallory extended warmest congratulations to Amos from Key West. "Be pleased to present my kindest regards to your lady...& say to her that I know you better than she does, & that with a certain kind of management—you will be, if not equal to me, still a very superior husband."[17] But prenuptial plans did not call for Phebe to join her husband. As Maureen Ogle notes, the public perception was that the Keys "contained nothing more than a deadly nest of murderous smugglers, pirates, and diseases."[18] Health was an overriding concern for Phebe. Still, virtually all of Amos' worldly assets, which had increased notably over the past decade, were vested in this semitropical paradise, and he had to leave Connecticut just a month after their wedding to tend to them.

Amos's letters to his wife, while taking care of business overseas, provide the first opportunity for a personal glimpse of Tift family affairs. It is obvious as his ship approached the Gulf that his attachment to the maritime South was in conflict with his devotion to her. "O. Phebe, how much have you to answer for!" Otherwise he had little cause to feel isolated from family. Despite recent news of sickness in Alabama, two of his sisters, Hannah and Elizabeth, were sailing for Mobile where his younger brother Julius was trading goods salvaged from Key West, and Asa and another brother, Lucius, a deaf mute, were overseeing Tift interests in the Keys. "Smack Ahoy!" was the greeting as Amos's vessel approached its destination. "What is the news at K. West? Is it healthy? 'All well' is the reply. Now there's good news for you," he reassured Phebe.[19]

An air of excitement, revealing his love for business risk and adventure, pervades Amos's correspondence as he relates observations of an exotic Southern culture far from his Yankee homeland. On a trip to Nassau he sold salvaged cargo of "such an assortment 'you never did see' at a profit of about 50%." If he cleared all of his purchases, he could expect to make about $500. Lest counting house talk not appeal to his beloved, Amos also described the local culture. Nassau was "a beautiful place and has the advantage of a fine climate. The air is soft, the sky clear and the moon so bright. O how I could

enjoy myself were you only with us. ...I want you here to walk with me and enjoy this fine moon, talk over our little affairs and review our past happy hours." As for the Bahamian people, he was more circumspect, providing an early indication of his attitude towards the most peculiar institution of the South.

> About 2/3 of the population here are Negroes and as you are aware, are free. It is the opinion of the knowing ones that they are not in reality as well off as they were before their liberation. I think their condition will improve as they become enlightened. They are quite proud of their freedom. The troops are composed of Blacks and are under excellent discipline. They would put our militia to the blush. They wear red coats, white trousers and black faces. What a contrast.

As further evidence to Phebe of the respectability of this distant land, and his own upright conduct, Amos attended church twice on Sunday—the Presbyterian "Kirk" in the morning and the Methodist "chapel" in the afternoon. "The people generally respect the Sabbath, which says a great deal for them." Finally, he was able to express his innermost feelings through some verses he found in the local press.

> The affection of a virtuous woman is one of the greatest blessings which Providence can bestow. When away from home, he feels in his heart that there is one kind being who is interested in his welfare and is offering up such prayers to Heaven for his safety—who will share with him the favors of fortune and be to him a solace and a comforter in the hour of trouble—who will welcome him to his home with unfeigned delight and partake with him the cup of life whether containing weal or woe.[20]

However much these eloquent phrases expressed his own sentiments, Amos could only hope they also expressed the feelings of his wife.

When evidence to this effect was not immediately forthcoming, the adventure, business opportunities, and primitive charm of Key West began to lose their appeal. Whereas Amos's letters were long and heartfelt, Phebe's were short and infrequent. Upon arrival of the Charleston mail in mid-December with no letter from her, Amos became distraught. "I really had a notion of quarrelling with the Post Master, but he assured me 'upon his honor' there was not a letter for me. I *ran to* his office and *walked* back. I was *almost* offended. I have as yet rec'd but one letter from you, and that a very short one. I have had to read it over repeatedly for the purpose of

making it as long as possible." Having failed to elicit from Phebe any desire to share his appreciation for the region's exotic lifestyle, Amos resorted first to scolding and then to a lengthy justification for their prolonged separation—that his motivation to succeed in business was not so much self but mutual interest. "I am quite industrious I assure you, and to flatter you a little, you are the principal spur to my exertions. I told you I should exert myself to promote your happiness, and by contributing to yours I add to my own a hundred fold." These were fine words, but it was obvious that neither party was happy. Friends were struck by Amos's change in habits. Formerly sociable, he now rarely went out in the evenings. "I retire at 9 and am up at day break, which surprises some of the gentlemen, as it is not fashionable." He had also taken to drinking hot water instead of tea and had "not smoked a segar since I left N. York." His free time was spent pining for Phebe, collecting books for her pleasure and self-improvement, and securing furniture, bedding, cookware, and even a cradle to bring back for their love nest.[21] It would not be cynical to suggest that the point behind this display of self-sacrifice was to bestow some measure of guilt upon Phebe to elicit a willingness to join, or at least support, her husband, who had essentially become an expatriot. It may have been that she was just not a good letter-writer or that she had little to write about, but the sparseness of her communications constituted a powerful lever on Amos in what was an intramarital power struggle where geography and culture served as terms of reference.[22]

Especially with his self-imposed spartan lifestyle, the Christmas and New Year holidays had a devastating impact on Amos. Searching for sympathy, he complained to Phebe that "my mind was wandering—somewhere." He desperately desired "some of the good things at home"—home in this instance meaning Mystic, not Key West, a sign of impending enlightenment. In lieu of being able to hear them, Amos simulated the words he wished to hear Phebe say: "Did you not say more than once, 'I really wish Amos were here—this Turkey is so tender, the sausages so nice, the crust of the Chicken Pie so light—and the mince pies, & it's *too* bad, that he should be there and I here.'...If I live I intend to spend next winter with you. I cannot help *crying* a little *now* at the thought, & how happy we will be." By the end of January 1840, having not heard from Phebe for three weeks, Amos snapped. "Business is very dull owing to the *extreme scarcity* of wrecks," he wrote. "We are at a heavy expense and doing nothing. I am tired of this business

and think I shall certainly close as near as I can in May or June. I am *so* homesick, and fear I shall not get over it till I see you. You have completely weaned me from Key West. Why has the place lost so many of its attractions?"[23] Phebe, by subtlest means, had broken the will of her husband, convincing him that just as he had adapted so well to his home across the water, he could just as well readapt to his original homeland.

During the next several months Amos had less time to indulge in self-pity as he set about liquidating his Key West assets. On 9 March he sold his interest in the warehouse and wharf for $8,000, payable in four installments at 8%. "Considering the hard times and the extreme scarcity of money, I am inclined to think it a good sale," he told Phebe. A few days later his business, A. C. Tift & Co., closed, and after sale of its stock, reopened as A. F. Tift & Co. It was unlikely that Amos would be able to collect all outstanding debts from customers, but being able to reunite with his betrothed seemed worth the sacrifice. "O what delightful times we will have,—reading, conversing, and loving each other. I have not felt so happy for a long time." Still his thoughts never strayed far from business, especially when he learned that Phebe had selected a spot for him to open a store in Mystic. In jest he asked if she would "be my clerk if I'll comply with your wishes? Only say that you will, and that you'll collect *all* the bad debts (including myself)."[24] Meanwhile Amos was "busy as a bee" in Key West. In addition to settling the affairs of two wrecks, he sold Asa his interest in the stock of sundries from the store, but he reserved some items, especially furniture, for his new home and business in Connecticut. "Can you have the store ready by the time I arrive?" he queried Phebe.[25] After many delays, occasioned by severance of business ties, Amos sailed in early June to create a new life. His return to Mystic was propitious at least in its timing, for exactly nine months later (16 March 1841) their first child, Henry Harding Tift, was born.

By this time brother Nelson had long since separated from the family fold. Charleston was one of the ports where the Tifts plied their salvaged wares, and it was natural that Nelson should choose that site for his first business venture. With fellow Connecticutian Jeremiah Holmes, twenty-eight years his senior, he established a "Fish & Grocery" store in 1830. When it failed, Nelson partnered with Isaac Bailey to sell provisions at the inland city of Augusta.[26] Here he exhibited many of the Yankee habits of mind that characterized his approach to life. Having chastised himself for the "bad practice" of getting up late in May 1835, he resolved henceforth "to rise

early and have *commenced* doing so." True to his middle-class origins, a debt or obligation had to be honored. "It always has been & I hope ever will be my intention to pay all for which I contract." He also became interested in law and undertook its study by reading *The Georgia Justice* by Rhodom Greene. Having served as a juror for a week, he liked "to hear the Pleadings of good Lawyers on important cases" and "to hear and watch the Pettifoggers with their unimportant cases who try to Grin and couzin the jury into a verdict for their client." Nelson was also abstemious. "I do not drink spirits of any sort, not even wine, beer or cider, neither tea or coffee—eat no meat, fowls, or fish," but he did "smoke & chew moderately." He seemed passionate about self-improvement, which included regular church attendance, where he kept a record of all sermons, and his formation of a debating club called the Young Mens Polemick Society. In his inaugural address on 20 July 1835, he stated that its object was "our mutual Improvement and Amusement," but "Improvement should be first, and Amusement a Secondary consideration." Most important was the pursuit of knowledge, "the only treasure from which man can never be parted, the halo of glory which surrounds him in life, and his sweetest hope in eternity." A final trait was Nelson's devotion to his country's traditions. "What heart so cold that does not glow with patriotick fire, while listning to the deeds of our ancestors during the American revolution" were his sentiments on the fifty-ninth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence—"a country's salvation from Tyranny, and the means (finally) of a world's emancipation from slavery & mental degradation." It seems ironic that Nelson was able to square these dulcet expressions about the land he loved, freed from the incubus of slavery, with a sentence of "fifty lashes on the bare back" he procured for the negress of a white woman with whom he had a scuffle.[27]

On reaching twenty-five Nelson mused that his life thus far was "like a dream," and he hoped to awaken to a "far better" reality. Such a tentative assessment of his progress is hardly surprising inasmuch as business was slow, and he was mired in debt. Nelson recalled that when he left Connecticut he was "flushed with the hope of wealth & happiness" and was "even with the world." But after five years in Augusta, he was "far behindhand," owing money for which he had no means of paying. An opportunity to extricate himself came in March 1836 when he was offered a clerkship in the firm of Gordy and Kimberley to buy cotton and sell groceries in the frontier settlement of Hawkinsville. An important aspect of this experience was his

role in removing the Indians from the lower Chattahoochee region. Years later Nelson recalled his friendship with the army's acting quartermaster, a Lieutenant Heinzelman, and how he had forwarded "176 wagon loads of goods from Hawkinsville to Columbus for Genl Scotts army who were running the Creek Indians."[28] His attitude toward the Creeks was not dissimilar to that which he held for blacks—both were inferior races subject to the white man's law. Furthermore, Nelson personally capitalized from their exploitation by developing a stake in Southwest Georgia. His timing could not have been better. Removal of the Creeks after the epic Battle of Chickasawachee Swamp in July 1836 provided him an opportunity.[29] In September he entered a partnership with five others, "Rawls, Tift & Co.," to establish a town in Baker County at the head of navigation on the Flint River. After divesting holdings and settling debts in Augusta, he was set to start a new life in the wild and wide-open Southwest.

Prior to its accession from the Creeks, the land on which Nelson settled was regarded with little enthusiasm by Georgians, notes Merton Coulter, who regarded it as "'sterile and unprofitable territory,' cut off from Georgia by the Indians on the north with the Spaniards on the south." Yet it intersected the two richest agricultural regions in South Georgia—the oak and pine uplands northwest of Albany and the wiregrass and sink lime region to the southeast. Here the soil, yellow sandy clay overlain by grayish sandy loams, was more productive than the pine barrens farther east. Geologist Roland Harper estimates there was "no other equal area in the coastal plain east of the Mississippi River with so much clay loam." These lands formed a fertile agricultural belt of cotton, corn, and other crops that extended from Dublin and Hawkinsville in the northeast to Blakely in the southwest.[30] James Callaway refers to the region drained by the Chattahoochee and the Flint as "among the finest cotton land in the State." Once the quality and immensity of these lands became known, notes Wilbur Zelinsky, there was a "strong southwestward vector in the direction of settlement" to the extent that this area was "settled so promptly that frontiers could scarcely be said to have had any real identity." Unlike earlier pioneering movements, big planters overshadowed small farmers.[31] Within this larger context, Nelson's movement from Augusta to Hawkinsville to Albany reflects the antebellum entrepreneurial frontier sweep across Georgia.

The lands between the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers were sparsely occupied in the 1830s, chiefly by rural neighborhoods and local networks of exchange. Whether Albany was originally a Quaker settlement and was laid out by Nelson's associate Alexander Shotwell is uncertain, but Tift is credited by virtually all sources for its founding.[32] The most important source verifying Tift as Albany's founder is an undated newspaper article in the *Camenman Chimes* in which Nelson testifies that

> Mr. Alexander Shotwell had no interest in, and had nothing to do with the location, original purchase, or survey of Albany.
>
> The land was purchased by Rawls, Tift & Co. of which firm Nelson Tift was the active partner, who commenced in the woods the building of the town in October 1836 had the survey made and in March 1837, purchased from the other members of the firm-Messrs. Rawls, King and Taylor, of Pulaski county and two brothers, Watts, of Fort Gaines-their entire interests.
>
> Messrs. Alexander Shotwell, Chaas Day, James R. Butts, and others constituting the "Flint River Land Company" owned rival town interests but in May 1837 they ceased their rivalry, and purchased an interest in Albany. This was Mr. Shotwell's first interest in the town.[33]

Albany was named after the city at the head of navigation on the Hudson, then celebrating its sesquicentennial. The challenges of starting a frontier community were formidable, and when Nelson's partners despaired of attracting settlers and profiting off river traffic to Apalachicola, he bought them out. He became Albany's sole remaining founder by May 1837 and secured incorporation the following year. Nelson then turned a questionable venture into a success, first by trading cotton and merchandise on his steamboat, the *Mary Emeline*, and then by selling some of his Albany lands to brokers in St. Joseph's (Florida), Macon, and Augusta. "The early days of steamboat navigation on the Flint," notes Edward Mueller, "were almost solely the work of one man, Nelson Tift." By June Nelson calculated his net worth (mostly in real estate) at about $12,000.[34]

During the next several years Nelson fostered success by land speculations, shrewd business transactions, and a profitable trade on the Flint, for which he purchased another steamer, the *Edwin Forrest.* Merchants in Apalachicola were eager to obtain cotton from upstream farmers, and Nelson transported it to them in exchange for $8,000 of merchandise, thus making a profit at both ends.[35] A visitor estimated that the half dozen merchants of

Albany sold $120,000 worth of dry goods and groceries in 1842 alone and that Nelson's community showed signs of his Yankee enterprise.

> The inhabitants are 3/4 of them from the north and one hears so many names mentioned that are familiar that it keeps up the illusion. Two years ago there were but 200 inhabitants in this city now there are some 800 showing a great increase for so short a time. The corporation includes 1 mile square and their building[s] are scattered over the whole of it. Every one seems to have built to suit himself without any regard to neighbors, if they had any it was a desire to give them as little trouble as possible by keeping a reasonable distance. The situation is a desirable one. The streets are wide and pleasant and should the vacant lots ever be occupied it will make a fair appearance. Now, every thing reminds one that they are in a new place. The houses are small, have been constructed as cheap as possible. Many of them built of hewn logs. It is a place of considerable business which must increase as the country becomes settled.

But Albany was merely part of a larger regional development. Within the next decade, Fort Gaines on the nearby Chattahoochee was allegedly shipping eight to ten thousand bales of cotton annually and selling between $250,000 and $300,000 worth of goods. Thus, owing to the output of the rich and recently opened lands of Southwest Georgia, Apalachicola during the 1840s displaced Pensacola as the third largest cotton port on the Gulf of Mexico, behind New Orleans and Mobile.[36]

Even Nelson's personal life seemed to reflect the outlook of a man of business. Although he had had various temporary relationships, Nelson's peripatetic lifestyle hardly enabled him to establish a stable home life. Now, with his finances in order, it was time to seek a wife. His choice, seeming almost an act of will, was Annie (Nancy) Maria Mercer, daughter of Mount Mariah Mercer, a Wilkes County teacher.[37] In contrast to the warm feelings he often expressed toward other women, the diary entry for his lightning (eight-day) courtship and marriage on 10 May 1838 reflects a cool, almost calculating view of matrimony. "She is in my estimation such a girl as will always command my esteem by her good qualities, and as to her beauty I am satisfied." Nelson proved to be a good provider, and Nancy gave birth to a daughter, Ann Elizabeth, in June 1839, and then six more children over the next seventeen years. This same matter-of-fact approach characterized Nelson's relationship with other members of his growing household, including a considerable number of slaves. His purchase of "three negro

fellows" for $2,350 in August 1838 is recorded in the same sentence as his acquisition of a two-horse barouche for $300. Later he traded three other slaves, a male and two females, for a store, warehouse, and some lots he had mortgaged. And in order to pay off the debt he owed on his new steamboat, Nelson sold a teenage girl named Anna whom he had observed "does well considering the chance she has had to learn."[38] This slightly endearing remark, however, is atypical of his wheeling-dealing manner by which slaves were treated chiefly as chattel and a medium of exchange. Though he approached both with the deliberate and resolute demeanor of a Yankee, Nelson, by his exploitation of blacks, was blending into the social fabric of the South.

His outlook, however, was by no means idiosyncratic of transplanted Northerners. Thomas Harrold, employed by a New York firm during the 1830s in the Southern trade, settled in Macon where he married and joined the Episcopal Church. In 1836 he explained to a Massachusetts associate that he had "no hesitation in saying that the reports of the cruelties practiced upon the blacks and of their unhappiness are equally false—I have been now almost a year in the South and not a single instance have I yet seen of inhuman treatment towards a slave." With "no cares" and "not knowing the value of that liberty which they have never possessed they are as happy as the day is long, and are contented to look upon the white man as their superior." Similar sentiments were expressed in 1835 by one of Harrold's kin, Nancy Fogle, who was visiting Norwich, Connecticut, to her father in Milledgeville. "I declare our servants I mean the negroes generally are in better condition than their servants here white or black." Not unlike Nelson Tift a decade later, Fogle condemned the abolitionists, whose only desire was "to make the blacks at the south discontented."[39]

Most evident at this time, however, were Nelson's civic virtues. In October 1838 he wrote the constitution for an anti-gambling society he had helped form. Subsequently Nelson became a trustee for Albany Academy, the city's first school, served as one of Albany's original commissioners, prepared its first law code after incorporation, and was elected colonel of the Baker County militia regiment, for which he would carry the courtesy title of "colonel." He was also elected a justice of Baker County Inferior Court, a position that entailed "little honor & some expense but must be endured by someone," he reasoned. Considering the need for "roads Bridges & the interests of the county...duty says go ahead and do your best." Duty

compelled him to refute an article in the *Columbus Enquirer* that misrepresented the health of his county and to become a director of the Ocmulgee and Flint Railroad.[40] Always a man of vision, Nelson realized that this seventy-six-mile project would make Albany the linchpin of a transportation system that would link the Atlantic Ocean with the Gulf of Mexico, thus saving traders the time and expense of traveling around Florida. Further to promote regional interests, Nelson attended two conventions in Milledgeville, one to reduce and equalize the legislative branches and the other a merchants' meeting where he offered resolutions against central banking, which he thought injurious to local banks.[41] However much he was regarded as a transplant, no one could gainsay the energy and civic-mindedness of this man from the North.

It was only natural that Nelson's prominence and associations with Milledgeville led to his selection as a candidate for the House of Representatives from Baker County. Taking the moral high ground, he vowed to "not solicit votes either by treating, bribery or deception," and when elected by an impressive majority of ninety-seven votes, he proudly observed that he had not "stooped to conquer." Among the legislative measures he sponsored was a bill permitting him to enlarge Albany, establish a mayor and council, and build a bridge across the Flint, which passed, and a bill to allocate a portion of the Poor School Fund for Baker County to two academies, which was lost. Beyond these local issues, Nelson became involved in Democratic Party politics and was vehemently anti-Whig. Most off-putting was the Whig Party's broad construction of the constitution, its position towards the national bank and distribution of public lands, and its opposition to the congressional rule prohibiting petitions to abolish slavery. Nelson had assumed a states'-rights and pro-slavery stance, but as a businessman he was most aroused by restrictions on private banking. His attempts to introduce a freer system that might stimulate growth in such frontier areas as Albany, though supported by Milledgeville representative Tomlinson Fort, was opposed by Governor Charles McDonald and other vested interests from the East. Nelson complained that the banking system, with its "exclusive priviledges," was an infringement of our natural & constitutional rights." As his cause appeared lost, he ranted: "The people are bank ridden, bank tributaries, bank yoked, bank slaves, and by their own consent. We denounce Aristocracy abroad, and submit willingly and tamely to the worst of Aristocracies at home—a humbug bank Aristocracy."

Nelson's staunch defense of the rights of the people appeared to be a microcosm of the national struggle of Jacksonian Democrats against the banking monopoly of Eastern Whigs, but his failure seemed to turn him against state politics. He was less than receptive to encouragements from his brother Amos, who expressed "pleasure for my success in life & predicts future political greatness. In this he will be mistaken unless indeed fortune should take a freak to raise me there without my having sought and even against my consent."[42] Nelson left Milledgeville before the session ended and chose not to stand for re-election.

Still Nelson had no serious thoughts of abandoning the roots he had established in the South. Not so with Amos, yet even he was drawn to Key West and Georgia periodically on business and family matters. The first such visit took place in late 1840 to reach a final settlement of his assets with Asa for which he received a mortgage deed. From Nelson he held a note for $1,000 (presumably for an earlier loan) plus an additional $1,000 worth of goods he was intending to sell on his return journey through Albany. Amos was still the wealthiest member of the family, and he was using his liquid resources to finance the fledgling operations of his brothers. He was now "nearly out of debt," he told Phebe, and "consequently feel *much* better." Indeed, his outlook was changing from adventurous and carefree youth to conservative and cautious middle age. "I find that I still retain my speculating disposition—although not disposed to run as much risk as heretofore. The thoughts of you are sufficient to find me on my guard and enable me to exercise a little prudence and discretion." An important aspect of Amos's newfound discretion was the retreat to his Connecticut birthplace. More than ever he yearned for "good old Mystic. Oh, the very thought transports me, and unless I am very cautious I fear I shall lose a *little* of my reason."[43] There was no surer sign of his renewed Yankee identity than homesickness.

By the time of Amos's next southward journey in fall 1843, there were two further factors contributing to his conservatism. The first was the birth of another son, William Orville, born in March of that year, and it was obvious that he missed his little boys. At the same time, having abandoned his business interests and social life in Key West, Amos turned to religion for fulfillment. In addition to attending church regularly, as he had been doing in Mystic, he started going to prayer meetings and lectures. At one such gathering at the Methodist Chapel he was moved to "testify of the goodness of the Lord" and advocated the "importance of attending to the interests of

the Soul." He even resorted to quoting scripture in his letters to Phebe. A continuing concern for Amos was the high degree of intemperance among islanders. When a ship laden with "Lard, Molasses, Lead and *Whiskey*" wrecked off the Tortugas, he suggested that "the last article is worth *just* enough to throw overboard." He feared that with increasing "intemperance, swearing, and Sabbath breaking," too many people were "treading the broad road that leads to Eternal death."[44] With the zeal of a convert, Amos was at last embracing the puritanical values of his native New England.

Nowhere was the romantic attachment that Amos felt for the South less evident than during his return (overland) journey through the wild lands of West Florida and Southwest Georgia. It took ten hours to travel from the coast up the Apalachicola River to Chattahoochee, and that was barely halfway to Albany. It was a long and tiring journey filled with boredom. Amos was even less enchanted with the people he encountered. "How lonely have I been today," he wrote on 30 November. "No sanctuary privilege have I enjoyed, and no lover of the Savior to converse with. Those in whose society I am thrown into are men of the world and many of them awfully profane." He felt "a stronger attachment than ever to my dear Home and the glorious privileges which God in His benevolence showers upon happy New England."[45] Gone was his wanderlust and zest for life, replaced by a sense of moral indignation and self-righteousness and a condescending attitude towards the South.

Nelson too could exhibit an air of moral superiority, but it lacked religiosity and was always carefully couched in respectful tones for his adopted land. After all, he had married a well-born Southern lady and had established a successful business career. This pride of place was evident in his civic-mindedness. Nelson was instrumental in constructing bridges across the Kinchafoonee, Muckalee, and Cooleewahee creeks and having a road blazed to Newton, thereby enabling mails to be delivered by four horse coaches to the west side of the Flint thrice weekly. Such was the primitive state of his city that often, as a magistrate, he had to perform police duties. "We had a terrible '*fracus*' in town last Saturday," he wrote on 2 September 1841. In keeping the peace

> I have no doubt saved the lives of several—one who was beat down by sticks, and others, by occupying a door between two parties who had guns & pistols ready aimed at each other & an abundance of Knives &c. drawn. On Monday

> I issued a warrant for the apprehension of all the parties concerned and have bound all that could yet be gotten hold of to keep the peace. They will be presented to the Grand jury next week.

A more challenging duty for him, as militia colonel, was to crush an insurrection of forty armed Irish workmen on the Ocmulgee and Flint Railroad in September 1843. They were incited by the fact that only $3,000 of $300,000 subscribed to the railroad had been received. With the project far from complete, the corporation was $10,000 in debt, and workers were being paid in worthless company shares. When they threatened the chief engineer, General Abbott Hall Brisbane, and his family at Loyola, Tift's troops took action. The workers were "completely surprised," he wrote, "having anticipated no such move though I have good reason to believe that we were but just in time to save them from violence."[46] This action must have been difficult for Nelson inasmuch as it ended a project to which he had devoted so much energy. It was likely he who changed the railroad's western terminus from Pindertown to Albany and furnished most of its supplies for construction. But his personal appeals to Savannah, Charleston, and Darien for additional capital to complete the railroad were to no avail.

Despite these setbacks, Nelson was doing a profitable business in land sales, merchandising, and agriculture. He owned a plantation of 250 acres north of Albany where he cultivated about eighty in corn and cotton. In January 1842 he reported that he had "killed salted & packed away more than thirty thousand pounds of Pork for baconing."[47] Several years later his sister, Frances Pynchon, who was living with him, told her sister that Nelson had planted "one hundred acres of corn, five of ground peas and half acre of sugarcane. We will have a great many peaches of which I intend to dry as many as I can." Frances was also raising "one hundred chickens—at least I have got that many eggs setting. You see that I am counting the chickens before they are hatched." Meanwhile her husband Daniel was shipping goods from Apalachicola by steamboat for Nelson to sell in Albany and returning with produce from Nelson's lands. Despite the inconvenience of not being able to send her daughter to school and only being able to come to town on Sundays for church, Frances did not object to the isolation and sacrifices that seemed necessary for her family to prosper.[48]

To assist with his many enterprises and make even more money, Nelson engaged in a regular trade of blacks. In June 1843 he noted that within a

month he had bought a boy and a girl, then sold them for a stock of goods and store fixtures that he could sell for $1,800, thus realizing a profit of 100 percent. What's more, he seemed unconcerned that "the family of negroes to which these belong" was broken up by his transactions—"all parties were pleased."[49] These sentiments seem surprising in light of Tift's Christian commitment. In 1841 he donated a half-acre lot to the Methodist Episcopal church and in 1842, along with his brother Charles, he joined the Baptist church "with the especial understanding that I adopt the Bible—the revelation of God—as my creed, and none other." When it proved impossible to accept the congregation's more "Calvinistic creed," he started attending the Methodist church and even studying the beliefs of Swedish theologian Emanuel Swedenborg. At no point, however, did his Christian conscience come to any serious reckoning with his practicing slavery. Nor was there any indication that his Southern credo was out of step with national norms. On 4 July 1843 Nelson rejoiced in "our national existance," which could only "fill the heart with gratitude for present blessings & future prospects."[50]

These patriotic sentiments and devotion to his city led to his founding (with S. N. Boughton) of the *Albany Patriot* in 1845. It was to be an organ of democracy, as stated in the inaugural issue, "emphatically for the people" and designed to "watch over and defend our political rights and advance the general welfare of our country." Albany at that point boasted over 1,000 settlers, 200 homes, sixteen stores, three hotels, two print shops, three schools, two churches, and saw and grist mills in the works. With prospects favorable to further improvements on the Flint and direct railroad connections to the Atlantic, Nelson deemed that "our destiny, is onward and glorious." Above all, the *Patriot* was committed, in contrast to the Whiggish *Albany Courier* (founded in 1841), to perpetuating "Democratic principles." "Independence and *political equality*," along with opposition to "advocates of monopolies and exclusive priviledges," were foremost features of its ethos. In specific terms, however, it took on a Jacksonian character of opposition to tariffs and the national bank. For Nelson, the Democratic Party, professing "equal rights and equal priviledges" and actuated by the satisfaction of "duty performed and an approving conscience," exhibited the "true spirit of patriotism, which is ready to sacrifice all personal considerations for the public good."[51]

These were earnest expressions of good will, and over the next decade Nelson attempted through his newspaper to improve the moral and physical well-being of Albany citizens, employing the Georgia watchwords of "wisdom, justice, moderation" as his guide. He took a special interest in education, noting in June 1845 that "*intelligence* rules the world, and that it is from this alone which separates us from, and raises us from the brute creation." Why then "does Georgia linger in the rear of many of her sister States in the present rapid march of intelligence and science, and consequent prosperity?" Later Nelson produced data showing that in Georgia 30,717 of 163,710 adult whites, nearly one fifth, could neither read nor write. By comparison, the illiteracy rate in Connecticut was only one in 311, the lowest in the nation, but in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama it was lower than Georgia.[52] Education was a prerequisite to progress in Nelson's eyes.

Likewise, adequate transportation facilities were necessary for Albany and his own business interests to prosper, and nothing was more essential than the railroad. "What would most benefit this section of Georgia," he declared, was "a safe and speedy communication with a good seaboard market." After working for years to revive funding for the partially completed Ocmulgee and Flint Railroad, Nelson turned his attention to the newly chartered South-Western Railroad. Although it had completed no work on the 100 miles to Macon, the South-Western had ties with individuals who had recently financed the Central Railroad's 191-mile stretch between Macon and Savannah (1843). This option would also connect Albany with Atlanta, which, having just made its transition from Terminus and Marthasville, was becoming a major hub. In 1845 the Georgia Railroad completed a 171-mile stretch from Augusta (and thence to Charleston), and in 1846 the Macon and Western Railway finished a 101-mile line from Macon to Atlanta, thereby offering Nelson two new routes to the sea via Macon.[53] In January 1849 he headed a committee to raise $150,000 for this link. "We have never seen a better feeling," he exclaimed, "a more determined spirit of action, by the entire community, than that which is exhibited to promote the proposed extention." When these plans did not materialize quickly, Nelson lent support to a more direct coastal connection through the Savannah and Albany Railroad. That it could become a transcontinental route seemed an even greater possibility with the vast Western lands acquired by the United States in the Mexican War. Citing advantages of cost, climate, and distance to a Southern route, Nelson pointed

out that Savannah and San Diego were on nearly the same latitude. He likened Southwest Georgia to an agricultural "strong man" who "still bleeds and languishes for want of an iron artery that shall connect the paralyzed members with the commercial heart of the State." It was not until 1857, however, that the South-Western Railroad was extended to Albany from Macon and Americus and not until 1871 that a line from the coast (Brunswick) reached Albany.[54]

No less a result of Nelson's promotion was the creation of Dougherty County in 1853. The issue arose just after his election to a third term in the Georgia general assembly in 1851. But he professed to be against any such change, stating that the people of Baker County were against it and, as their "faithful representative," he would "oppose the change until we have unmistakable evidence that the people desire it." Two years later, however, Nelson had a change of heart, presumably over the inconvenience of attending court sessions in Newton. "Almost the entire population of our place is at Newton," he complained, "detained from business at the great expense of time, money and patience. Such a state of things is intolerable."[55] Lest it appear a conflict of interest, Nelson's name appears nowhere in the legislative proceedings of the bill that created Dougherty County from the northeastern portion of Baker, but it would be difficult to believe that his was not the spirit and guiding hand behind its passage. At the very least it was his civic enterprises in Albany that established the developmental basis for it.

This instinct for joint commercial/civic involvements was shared by brother Asa in Key West. With the general store and wrecking connections he had acquired from Amos as a base, Asa quickly became a key player in the island's development. He was instrumental in creating its first fire department, called "La Fayette," and served with Stephen Mallory on the Key West election committee. In 1841 he secured appointment as an auctioneer for Monroe County, enabling him, like Amos, to assume a vital role in the wrecking industry.[56] Asa applied himself energetically to the business and enjoyed at least as much success as his father and older brother. In October 1846, however, a hurricane devastated the island, and according to a newspaper report, "all the buildings" belonging to Asa, including one of large dimensions and his wharf, were destroyed.

> With his usual energy, Mr. Asa Tift, sole owner of the property—commenced, at once, to rebuild, and in a short time put the property in better condition than ever, including the erection of two stone buildings now used as bonded warehouses, also, two fine wharves, coal platform, &c., &c. Mr. Tift soon retrieved his fortunes. To him is due the inauguration of regular Steam Communication with our city.[57]

Amidst this flurry of activity, he still made periodic trips to foster business at ports in the gulf and Charleston and to visit family members in Mystic. Such was his dedication to business that he remained unwed into his mid-thirties. Then in 1847 he married Annie Wheeler, the sixteen-year-old daughter of Morris and Amanda Wheeler of Camden, South Carolina. That Annie, unlike Phebe Tift, joined in her husband's business trips is evident from the birthplaces of their children Anna, Cora, and Maurice in Key West (1849), Point Clear, Alabama (1851), and Newark, New Jersey (1852). But it was also evident that Asa, by purchasing a lot on Whitehead Street on the outskirts of town in 1850, intended to provide a permanent nest for his young family.[58]

Concurrently, Asa's younger brothers Charles and Lucius had joined him from Albany and Mystic respectively. For the latter Asa served as a caregiver. How much Lucius contributed to the family's prosperity is uncertain, but he prided himself on his garden, which abounded with fig trees, flowers, and grape vines. Notwithstanding the satisfaction he felt for the success of his able-bodied brothers, what Lucius wanted most was his own family. "I am 32 years old last March 1st 1845," he wrote his sisters in Connecticut, "& I have no Sweet Heart on this Key West!!!" Nelson offered to keep him too, but Lucius held out hopes that life would get better—that he might soon own stock in Asa's store and own some land on Pine Key. "I can talk with every body," he protested, "& Spaniards better than the Americans & Country folks—with signs."[59] It probably never occurred to his well-meaning relations that Key West was one of the least likely places in the United States to find a single woman and lead a normal family life.

Charles, who had been nurtured in his youth by Nelson, greatly assisted with the family's mercantile and wrecking operations on Key West. In 1842 Charles married Julia Ward of Georgia and sired three children, Charles (1844), William (1849), and Julia (1852). Through Asa's influence, Charles secured a commission from the federal government in 1853 to become Naval

Storekeeper, a post which, according to local attorney Robert Hackley, "gives him $1,500 salary and I suppose years will elapse before he has anything to do, as at present there is no Naval Store or Stores to keep." He also secured power of attorney to exercise all merchant-related functions while Asa was on trips.[60] Charles and his wife mixed easily with other leading citizens of the community, including Hackley. Very often the social profile of Charles and Asa was enhanced by visits from Connecticut relatives, including their mother, and the presence of their sister Caroline, whose husband, Oliver Noyes, was no doubt employed in the family business. It thus appeared that the Tifts' enterprises on Key West, despite the hurricane and Amos's departure, were in better shape than ever. In 1852 R. G. Dun, the credit-reporting firm, estimated their operation (valued at $12,000) to be "somewhat speculative," but Asa was "shrewd & careful" and doing the best commissary business on the island.[61]

Fate, however, intervened. During the next decade Asa experienced a series of personal tragedies. In May 1854 an epidemic of yellow fever swept the island and first claimed the life of his one-year-old son, Maurice Wheeler Tift, on the 14th, then his two-year-old daughter, Cora Nelly Tift, on the 19th, and finally his wife Annie on the 20th. In the meantime, she had given birth to another son, also named Maurice Wheeler, on the 16th, but he too died twelve months later.[62] Additionally, Charles was stricken with the fever. On the 26th Hackley recorded that in the early afternoon

> Charles Tift came up very ill nearly fainting and an intense headache. We sent for the Doctor Richard F. Simpson and holding his head over a basin poured water on it until Felix Senac sent up some ice when I kept cloths wet in ice water to his head until the Doctor came, he said it was the best thing that could be done. He ordered a hot mustard bath, 20 grains blue pills and C. Oil while in the bath Charles commenced perspiring and soon after taking a blue pill went to sleep. When he awoke his shirt was so wet he had to change it and when the Doctor came about 7 he was very comfortable. The doctor ordered him to take 30 grains of quinine tomorrow commencing at daylight, he thinks that it is an attack of fever.

Charles survived but had a difficult recovery. A year later his wife, Julia, was seriously injured when she spilled a cup of hot gruel and was burned

from neck to feet on her left side. Tragedy also stalked the family of another Tift brother, Julius, who, having failed in Mobile, arrived in Key West in June 1855 to work in Asa's counting house. When he died in New York City the following April, Hackley reported that his wife, Catherine Noyes Tift, "screamed for hours. ...She is left without anything." Asa kept her and the two children until they could return to a safer family haven in Mystic.[63]

Finally there was fire. On the morning of 20 September 1855 lightning ignited the cupola on Asa's office complex. According to Hackley, it "ran down the four corners of the building," stunning Asa and shocking several others in the counting room.

> The lightning passed between the weather boarding and plastering and broke through just about the barometer in the northwest corner which it broke into atoms and about 12 inches below reentered the wall making a smooth hole about the size of a musket ball in the plastering and broke out the whole frame of the window on the eastern side near the desk where it tore to ribbons a quantity of papers which were on an iron file. It then stopped a marine clock which was in the iron chest at 11:45.[64]

Far more serious was another "great fire," when Asa's stone warehouses and offices were saved, according to Hackley, only by the "noble exertions of a few of our citizens and his servants." Nevertheless his losses were considerable—the store and its stock, along with a steam pump, were gone—worth $4,600 and no insurance. Yet he recovered. It was rebuilt, and in 1858 Asa admitted Charles as a partner.[65] Considering the adversities he had experienced over the previous two decades, Asa's conduct was nothing short of heroic. Key West exacted a high price from anyone who sought to survive in its tropical environs. Few places in the United States featured so many dangers.

Survival for Nelson in the antebellum South was quite another matter. His experience in South Georgia coincided with axiomatic statements of Fletcher Green and Richard Current about adapting to Southern culture. Despite his Northern origins, there was never any doubt about where Nelson's sympathies lay. His first public revelation of a Southern bias took the form of a personal testimony directed at Northern abolitionists in 1845. Speaking as "one who was raised and educated at the North, but who has resided long enough in the South to be acquainted with the subject" of slavery, Nelson found "many of the planters, highminded, benevolent and

pious men. He sees that many things that had been told him by the Abolitionists were false, that the negroes are mostly comfortable, contented and happy." On another occasion he castigated congressmen who, while professing to represent Southern interests, were actually "wolves in sheep's clothing" and aiding the abolitionists. "By setting forth in gaudy, but false colors, the superior advantages of free over slave labor, they are gradually preparing the way for emancipation." Most galling were accusations of the rival *Courier* during the 1847 election campaign that Nelson was profiteering from ferries he owned on the Flint and that "he sends respectable white mechanics to his kitchen to eat with the negroes." The latter in particular provoked an outburst of indignation. The charges, Nelson contended, were "FALSE and SLANDEROUS," revealing "the burning glare and malice of the fiend." He produced evidence showing the "great injustice to those who worked for him" by "reports that he sends them to eat in the kitchen with the negroes."[66] Lest these remarks be dismissed as an isolated instance of racist verbiage, Nelson revealed his true feelings in a *Patriot* editorial entitled "African Slavery, Its Blessings and Cursings."

> Though the negro in his native land, and in his natural condition, was the embodiment of ignorance, and the personification of evil, yet he possessed an animal frame capable of performing many of the uses of life, and an embryo intellect which was capable of being expanded to the comprehension of order and moral obligation. But this change could not have been wrought upon him in his native land, by all of the missionaries and moral philosophers that ever preached or wrote. To accomplish such a change, required that he should be placed in the power of civilized man; that he should be removed from the associations of a lawless life, and reduced to order, by being compelled to work, and produce something which would swell the aggregate of human enjoyments and human elevation. The only means to this end was involuntary servitude, or slavery in its unqualified sense.

Using this rationale, Nelson justified the use of slaves not only for labor but as a medium of exchange. But even this practice had its limits, as in the case of a woman he called "the commonest roughest kind of a 'corn field nigger,'" whom he unsuccessfully tried to pawn off for some land he had purchased from an associate.[67]

Nevertheless slaves, as a form of property, had considerable value, and Nelson, both as businessman and transplanted Southerner, defended his right to own them.[68] According to data derived from 1856 tax records, there were 4,428 slaves in Dougherty County worth $2,230,915, or 38% of the county's wealth. Land, the next most valuable form of property, was worth just $1,781,881, or 30%. While Nelson owned only twenty slaves, he was encouraged by these figures, estimating that if property was equally divided, each county voter would be "a considerable farmer with nine slaves valued at five thousand dollars, and ten thousand dollars worth of land. ...Thus it will be seen that *we have the richest county in the world.*" When a Houston County citizen questioned this boast in the *Macon Telegraph*, claiming his county was proportionately wealthier, Nelson rose to the challenge. Additional number-crunching revealed that Dougherty's slaves were 35 percent more valuable than Houston's, and its land was worth three dollars per acre more. This chamber-of-commerce-style pride in slave holdings stands in bold relief to Northern trends since the advent of abolitionism. New York, for example, reported 20,903 slaves in the census of 1800; 10,088 in 1820; seventy-five in 1830; four in 1840; and none in 1850. Likewise, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Illinois had no slaves by 1850.[69] Little wonder, with such demographic disparities, that sectional animosities steadily rose.

What triggered a sudden outburst of anti-Northern hostility was ratification of the Compromise of 1850. As Southern-rights associations emerged all over the South, Nelson sided with the extremists. "It is the first duty of a free people to be watchful and vigilant to the protection of all their rights," he advised readers. They should insist upon "*a strict construction of the Constitution.*" At the heart of the matter was "the slavery question," and in the pending conflict between Democrats and abolitionists, so-called Unionists would need to take sides. "In that fight he that is not for us is against us" was his iteration of the Southern creed he had come to accept. Nelson also carried his convictions to the Georgia legislature where he sought to overturn a bill prohibiting the import of slaves for sale. He also introduced a bill "to protect the rights of the people of Georgia against unjustifiable attacks, encroachments or usurpations by other states." Lest his credentials, as a Yankee, be suspect, he restated his newspaper's position on slavery. As a devout Christian, he sought to establish the highest moral justification for his beliefs by citing biblical chapter and verse. "We believe

slavery to be expressly sanctioned by the word of God, and entirely consistent with the most pure and exalted standard of morality and Christianity. The almighty himself authorized the buying, selling, and holding in perpetual bondage of men and women—the same God who gave us our system of Christianity." As the likelihood of war loomed in the late 1850s, Nelson's vituperative attacks, once limited to Whigs and abolitionists, were extended to know-nothings and Republicans, along with a new enemy that he labeled "Fanaticism at the North." This demonic force "for the first time reaches forth its paracidial grasp, threatening to polute the Constitution itself. We are to decide now whether the government shall be fairly and justly administered, or whether the South, insulted, wronged, and robbed by the Freedom Shriekers of New England shall in self-defence, cut loose the ties which bind us to them."[70] It would be no exaggeration to say that this Connecticut Yankee had effectively severed all ties with the Freedom Shriekers and fallen into the embrace of the Fire-Eaters.

Yet he retained the basic elements of his practical Northern mentality. In his fortieth year, after hearing a "good and practical" sermon, Nelson "wrote out a system of rules for the disposition of my time—my business is such that I cannot adhere to it strictly, but will try to come near it." In 1858, despite his aversion to blacks, he hired Horace King, a free black master builder, to construct a 930-foot bridge across the Flint and a two-story brick structure to serve as a toll house, an office, and a meeting hall.[71] According to local legend, Nelson persuaded his builder to abandon a stalled project in Milledgeville and haul his timbers to Albany.[72] The new bridge was welcomed by local cotton growers and businessmen who praised Nelson for his public spirit. "His persevering energy is worthy of high praise" was the view of the *Patriot*, now under new ownership. Nelson's ardent advocacy of commercial interests was also evident in the many business enterprises he owned in Albany, including a grocery store where the erstwhile teetotaler purveyed such intoxicants as "Brandies, Wines, Cordials, Lemon Syrup, Whiskey, Gin and Rum," in addition to such staples as "White Beans, Irish Potatoes, Buckwheat...and Dried Fruit." Still prewar Albany, for all its progress in two decades, had only 1,500 people, less than Newton at 2,225 or Americus at 3,000.[73] It also retained many rusticities of a backcountry settlement. In 1858 city ordinances prohibited indiscriminate digging in the streets and running of goats and hogs. Total tax receipts were $5,330, and there were 104 offenses committed, including fighting (32), disorderly

conduct (22), insulting language (14), keeping a disorderly house (8), driving drays without a license (6), fast and dangerous riding (5), malicious prosecution (3), gambling (3), horse and buggy riding on the sidewalk (2), and indecent exposure (2).[74] When war became imminent in early 1861, it seemed natural that the aging entrepreneur, now fifty, should relinquish his civic responsibilities and military commission as colonel of the 63rd militia and lend his talents to building a superstructure for the Confederacy.

By this time Nelson's operations in South Georgia were prospering as much as those of Asa and Charles in Key West, while brother Amos, though responsible in great part for the family's diaspora, had settled into a comfortable domesticity in Mystic.[75] To his son Orville, on the eve of the Civil War, Amos communicated tried and true Yankee sentiments. "Pay particular attention to every thing which may contribute to your moral and religious culture, and *flee* from every thing which would have a deleterious influence as you would from deadly poison," he counseled. "If you live, you will soon be old enough to engage in business, and I am extremely anxious that you should be well qualified."[76] Unlike Amos, the two brothers who headed South were taking chances, not only with their health and well-being but by having to adapt psychologically to a different climate and culture. Both areas were frontiers, recently wrested from Indian control and open to white man's civilization. But Southern culture, with new and more serious racial issues that struck at the root of the economic and political structure, soon overtook these regions and differentiated them from the abolitionist North. Over the next decade the cohesiveness of the family, as well as the nation, would be put to the test.

Part II

Constructions

3

Secession, Civil War, and Reconstruction

We must at once build immense floating iron-clad batteries to defend our rivers, and must place formidable obstructions under their guns. Otherwise we are doomed.

The Southern army must depend upon the cotton states for bread, and the planters hold the destiny of the nation in their hands.[1] —General George Anderson Mercer

"War! War!! War!! 75,000 Barbarians Coming Down on the South!" were the headlines in the *Albany Patriot* after the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861. Adding to the emotional insecurity of areas such as Southwest Georgia were the prospect of a social revolution and the possible breakdown of racial barriers and taboos. Clement Eaton suggests that "the black belts of the South looked with fear not merely toward the loss of valuable property, but toward the social consequences of liberating the Negro in districts where black people outnumbered the whites."[2] By this time Nelson Tift's land assets approximated $165,000, but the inland location of Albany provided security against any immediate threat of invasion, confiscation, or social revolution.[3] Clearly Asa, also possessing property of great value and exposed to immediate seizure by Union forces by sea, had the most to lose. According to the 1860 census, his household included only his nine-year-old daughter, Anna, but he had real estate holdings worth $40,000 and personal property worth $57,000, making him one of the wealthiest citizens in Florida.[4]

The Tift brothers, disregarding personal risk in the event of a Union victory, decided to side with the South, but initially Asa's degree of commitment, along with that of his brother Charles, was greater. Upon outbreak of hostilities virtually all "cultivated and wealthy citizens" of Key West were "strongly pro-Southern," reports Jefferson Browne. At a courthouse meeting in December 1860, with Charles as secretary, Asa, an "avowed secessionist," was nominated as one of three Monroe County men

to attend a state convention at Tallahassee on 3 January.[5] The sixty-nine delegates had to decide whether Florida should secede immediately or do it with other slave-holding states. The critical vote came on a motion made by A. K. Allison of Gadsden County that the secession ordinance should not take effect until Georgia and Alabama had seceded, and if either of those states refused, Florida would not secede until its citizens approved it by direct vote. This more timid course had no appeal to Asa, who voted with the 47 to 27 majority to defeat the motion and move towards immediate secession. What may have motivated Asa's decision was pressure to conform. "The State authorities at Key West were secessionists," notes Judge William Marvin, and "Unionists were liable to bad treatment from them." Thus many of Marvin's closest friends became secessionists.[6] Ralph Wooster's analysis of the Florida convention shows that Asa fit the secessionist profile. He was among the majority of merchants, slave-holders, and those with a higher net worth who voted for secession, but the most telling trait was that all the non-Southerners—those born in seven Northern states, Ireland, and the Bahamas—were also in this group. The "typical secessionist," concludes Wooster, "was born probably in Georgia, South Carolina, or a Northern state," not Florida. Asa's actions reveal not only the completeness of his cultural conversion to the South but that his transformation was not unique among transplanted Yankees in Florida.[7]

Meanwhile Union forces, stationed at nearby barracks under Captain James Brannan, took over Fort Taylor at Key West and prepared to resist local dissidents. "The sentiment of Key West was strongly Southern," notes Jefferson Browne, "but with the fortifications in possession of Federal troops, and no military organization here sufficient to wrest this control from them, the secessionists were deterred from taking any active steps to capture them." Any hopes of a takeover were dimmed by the arrival on 6 April 1861 of Major William French and the Fifth United States Artillery. French suspended habeas corpus and prohibited any display of sympathy for the South. Soon anti-Unionist sentiment was obliterated and the tide of public opinion began to turn, especially with the formation of a company of Unionists and suppression of the local newspaper. "Matters went from bad to worse, and every act of cruelty towards Southern sympathizers was hailed with ghoulish glee." Under these conditions the plight of the Key West Tifts became precarious. French reported that among those fleeing on *The Salvor* was the local magistrate, a judge with his family, and "Mr. Asa Tift and his

negroes." It was a bitter sacrifice for the Tifts and the cause they embraced. Key West, Browne contends, "was the most strategic point within the Southern Confederacy," and its occupation by federal troops and use as a naval base was critical to the outcome of the war.[8]

Returning to their native New England was not an option for either Asa or Charles. Both had resided in the South for several decades, had taken Southern wives, and fathered Southern children. They journeyed forthwith to Georgia to make common cause with Nelson, no less a true son of the South. While Charles tended to family business in Albany, Nelson and Asa quickly assumed an active role in Confederate affairs, not in logistics or leadership in the field but in naval engineering, an area seemingly foreign to their erstwhile roles as businessmen and civic leaders. Their construction of one of the South's first ironclads, *The Mississippi*, may be attributed in part to their family's maritime tradition. Additionally Asa had been an intimate friend of Stephen Mallory, the newly appointed Confederate Naval Secretary.[9] Formerly a United States senator from Florida, Mallory had associated with the Tifts in business and government during his Key West days. Like the Tifts, his father was a Connecticut Yankee, and his mother was the first white woman on the island. Soon after Asa arrived in Albany, he and Nelson hatched a plan to neutralize the great productive advantage held by the industrialized North. Nelson, according to naval historian Thomas Scharf, "considered that the weakest point of the Confederacy, as well as the strongest point of the United States."[10] This view was shared by Mallory, who believed a deployment of ironclads could break the enemy blockade and challenge the entire Union fleet of wooden ships. Exactly how this meeting of minds took place is uncertain, but Nelson quickly capitalized on their association by designing a vessel to be made of green pine with all straight lines and no curved ribs or rounded ends, so simple even house carpenters could build it.[11] The Tifts took their plan, along with a wood model, to Savannah and Charleston where they shared it with some enthusiastic officers, and then to Richmond on 26 August 1861. Their timing was perfect. Only two days earlier President Jefferson Davis had signed an appropriations bill that included $800,000 "for floating defenses of New Orleans." Impressed with the Tifts' design and their offer to accept no compensation except travel, Mallory endorsed their proposal. On 1 September he confided to his diary, "I have concluded to build a large ship at New Orleans upon Nelson Tift's plan, & I will push it."[12]

The Tifts arrived in New Orleans on 18 September and set to work on a site in nearby Jefferson City. Their craft would be 280 feet long, weigh over 4,000 tons, and draw fourteen feet of water. Its power plant would consist of three engines generating 1,500 horsepower through three shafts to produce a speed of fourteen knots. On the main deck would be twenty cannons, protected by four inches of armor mounted on its casemate at a thirty-degree angle. To this end Schofield & Markham, an Atlanta firm owned by transplanted Yankees, would supply 390,325 pounds of iron plates.[13] On 14 October the Tifts laid the first plank of *The Mississippi* and were soon joined by E. C. Murray, contractor for a smaller ironclad, *The Louisiana*, on an adjacent site. Despite their efficient manner, work delays—caused by frequent militia drills by local army commanders, lack of parts from distant sources, and a crippling strike—prevented a timely completion of the craft. The strike, considered by Eaton "the most significant...in the Confederacy," lasted 6 to 12 November, six days that proved critical to the ship's inability to defend New Orleans five months later from the onslaughts of Union Admiral David Farragut's gunboats.[14] Only a few days before Farragut seized control of the river, *The Mississippi* was launched, but the center shaft and propeller were not connected with the engines, and the two side propellers were still on the wharf in New Orleans.[15]

On 24 April 1862 the crisis became acute when the Union fleet passed the forts guarding the city. Unable to find a place of refuge for it in time, Captain Arthur Sinclair had to scuttle the vessel to keep it from falling into enemy hands. O. J. Noyes, husband of their sister Hannah, vividly describes the demise of the Tift brothers' creation when he reached the construction yard. He witnessed

> a scene not easy to describe and not soon to be forgotten. The Mississippi was belching forth huge volumes of flame from every port hold and ventilator. Boats were along side receiving everything movable, ropes, hausers etc. All the state rooms had been broken open and pillaged of every thing they could lay their hands upon. The office door had been broken down and robbed of all the desks, chairs, couches, etc. The yard and Blacksmith shop were full of men, women and children carrying off whatever they could lift. The gates and fences torn down. Cypress and pine boards, pottery, baskets, brooms etc. and such cursing and swearing.

Later Noyes returned to the city where he and his son Charley observed eight federal ships "anchored abreast of Canal street while on the wharf the Mississippi having burnt off her fastings floated majestically down through the midst of the fleet flaming at every opening & kept splendidly on her course till she turned the slaughterhouse point when she grounded & when we left she was burning brilliantly as ever."[16] Nelson was grief-stricken. "It is impossible to describe our feelings," he later confessed. "We had devoted months of labor and care to her construction, and our hearts were set upon her success and the prospects of good service which she would do for our country."[17] A contemporary account observes that he was "unmanned" and wept openly.[18]

The significance of the loss was equally evident in the reaction of Mallory, who called the destruction of his Mississippi naval squadron "a sad blow, & has affected me bitterly, bitterly, bitterly!" "The Night the War was Lost," is how one historian describes the fall of New Orleans, and it had seemed at one point within the grasp of the Tifts to save it.[19] Not surprisingly, recriminations for the loss of *The Mississippi* quickly spread, and they did not escape their share of the blame. Although Nelson vehemently denied it, the story arose that as orders were being carried out to torch the ship, five men came aboard asking for him. When informed he was not present, "with an oath they cried out, 'He is a traitor and we brought this rope to hang him.'"[20] In the midst of the mayhem surrounding the burning of *The Mississippi*, it was impossible for Noyes or his son to retrieve a box containing contracts and financial records showing the obligations incurred by Nelson and Asa on behalf of the Confederate government. Still many workers and creditors held them personally responsible, and it was likely that their haste in escaping up river to Vicksburg was motivated not only by the prospect of capture by Union occupation forces but the need to avoid the wrath of the New Orleans mob.

A hero's welcome hardly awaited the Tifts when they arrived in Vicksburg. They were immediately arrested under orders issued by a provost-marshal in New Orleans, taken to the military governor, Colonel James Autry, and charged with burning *The Mississippi*. They also encountered another angry mob, aroused by suspicions about their Connecticut origins. Through the timely intervention of Paymaster Felix Senac, a friend of Asa when stationed at Key West before the war, the Tifts were rescued from "the excitement of the crowd" and "the insolence" of the

officer who had arrested them. Still they had to endure the indignity of being placed under custody of Governor John Pettus in Jackson and then subjected to scrutiny by a naval investigating board in Richmond the next summer. The accusations and suspicions of their misconduct in New Orleans seemed "inexplicable" to Nelson, except on grounds of "hostility to us as the agents of the Government." The actions of Autry and Pettus, he believed, were "influenced by false statements, privately made by pretended friends, but real enemies of the Government, who made them doubt our innocence, notwithstanding the unanimous testimony to the facts."[21] What lay ahead was uncertain, but Asa and Nelson owed their "safe release" in Vicksburg to Paymaster Senac, who, according to his biographer, "played the hero."[22]

Most of the questioning in Richmond related to Mallory's conduct, but the Tifts' ties to him and their joint motives became part of the inquiry. Although Asa had voted for secession in Florida and Nelson had been an outspoken anti-abolitionist, the extent of their patriotism was questioned. "Where are the Tifts from—where were they born?" asked the chief inquisitor. "How long have they resided in the South?" asked another. Only Asa's dealings with some Northern businesses and with the federal government itself during the early stages of the war provided any grounds for suspicion. Otherwise, the board failed to find anything sinister, and both Mallory and the Tifts survived this challenge to their integrity and loyalty to the South. In fact, by the end of the proceedings the momentous nature of their contribution became evident. A Confederate commodore testified that *The Mississippi* "was the greatest vessel in the world. I don't suppose there was ever such a vessel built." Another witness concurred that "she was entirely a new conception, and a remarkably fine vessel." But the greatest tribute came from a Union officer who had surveyed the wreckage. "In New Orleans our naval officers found the most splendid specimen of a floating battery the world has ever seen...and had she been finished and succeeded in getting to sea, the whole American navy would have been destroyed."[23] With all due allowance for exaggeration, few would deny that *The Mississippi* was a tour de force.

Proof positive of the Yankee brothers' loyalty to the South was provided by their continued service to the Navy for the war's duration. Even while working on *The Mississippi*, they had designed and contracted materials for two small steamers "on the same plan."[24] Soon after the debacle in New Orleans and long before the investigating committee met in

Richmond, the Tifts, again through Mallory, were enlisted to convert a British-built merchant steamer, *Fingal*, into the ironclad *Atlanta* in Savannah. Unlike their New Orleans experience, there were no delays, labor problems, or time constraints, and the work was completed with all dispatch. "She was strongly and quickly built," Nelson proudly asserted, noting that "her speed, her steering capacity and her guns were all tested and proven satisfactory."[25] The vessel carried two 6.4-inch and two seven-inch rifles, its armor consisted of four inches of iron braced with three inches of oak and fifteen inches of pine, and it had a ramming bow with a percussion torpedo extended on a twelve-foot spar. Its only handicap was a sixteen-and-a-half-foot draft, which would be irrelevant once it ventured into deep waters. Understandably, the Northern press expressed concern that *The Atlanta* was capable of devastating such East Coast ports as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.[26]

Yet naval command seemed unprepared to employ *The Atlanta* to break the stranglehold of Union vessels on Savannah. "While our Army has become so expert and so daring in the use of heavy guns, even on the water, our Navy exhibits no enterprise whatever," lamented General George Mercer in April 1863. "With the Fingal, a splendid Iron-clad at their command, the naval officers at this point have not made the slightest demonstration against the enemy, though his wooden Gun Boats prowl about our River and Inlets actually inviting attack." It was the "old naval officers," Mercer believed, who were responsible for this sad state of affairs. Unfortunately *The Atlanta* eventually fell under the command of an impetuous young officer and was captured by two Union monitors on 17 June. Mercer explained that

> the Atlanta steamed boldly down to meet the enemy, and everyone anticipated her brilliant triumph. The sad termination of her career has produced a general gloom in this City. Lieut. Comdg. Kennard of the Isondiga witnessed the meeting at the distance of two and a half miles; he reports that the Atlanta ran aground; she was soon again afloat, and advanced boldly towards the monitors; a second time she appeared to be aground, and did not alter her position. She fired only four shots, when the Yankees were seen to approach and board her, she not contesting their advance; the inference is that her crew mutinied and delivered her up. The Atlanta was a fine ironclad, mounting four splendid Brooke Guns. She is a great loss to us and a great gain to the enemy; they will obtain the pattern of the celebrated Brooke Gun, which will easily pierce eight inches of iron, and is more

> formidable than any of their heavy ordnance; they will also secure the torpedo placed at her prow, which is a recent invention, and from the use of which we anticipated great results.

Had *The Atlanta* not run aground, Mercer was convinced it would have defeated the monitors. But he was dismayed that many of the crew, "30 odd (foreigners)," had defected to the Union. No mention was made of the craft's builders or the possibility of sabotage, but Mercer was highly critical of Northerners, especially the "virtuous Puritans of New England" and those supposedly serving the South. "The Enemy derive many advantages from northern born men in our midst; a large proportion of them are hostile, and ready to take the oath of allegiance as soon as an opportunity is presented."[27]

It was this kind of attitude that had embroiled the Tifts in controversy after the loss of *The Mississippi*. Although not beset by any similar set of circumstances, Nelson felt the need to justify their actions for posterity when Thomas Scharf's *History of the Confederate States Navy* appeared in 1887. Contrary to Mercer's view, Nelson did not believe *The Atlanta* could have successfully engaged the Union monitors, with their fifteen and eleven-inch guns and ten-inch armor. Indeed his ship was ready on 31 July 1862 when there were no monitors at Savannah. Then "the Atlanta would have been a successful match for any other class of U.S. vessels, large or small," he concluded. "Why she did not go to sea then I do not know." By the time of the battle, nearly a year later, only the "desperate measure" of striking the enemy's bow with the underwater torpedo had any chance of success. But neither surface nor underwater action was possible once the ship ran aground, and "Captain Webb very properly surrendered. This was no test of fitness or proper construction of the Atlanta for the purposes for which she was built." As evidence of the ship's soundness, Nelson pointed out that "her captors sent her to sea without repairs and when she arrived in Philadelphia she was easily repaired and joined the Federal squadron at Fortress Monroe. I write this to vindicate my brother Mr. A. F. Tift and myself from any imputation or appearance of improper or inefficient action in our service as agents of the Navy Department during the war."[28] This defense was hardly necessary, especially considering the Tifts' commitment to the Southern cause and the competence of their work. Like *The Mississippi*, *The Atlanta* could have altered the war's outcome. That it did not cannot be attributed to

faulty conception or workmanship by the Yankee brothers but to failures of execution by their Southern comrades.

In the meantime the Tifts in Connecticut seemed far less passionate and much less involved with the war. Business, religion, and his family were the consuming interests of Amos. Although he never regained the entrepreneurial zeal he had displayed on Key West, his interest in civic virtue and church affairs steadily increased. Amos was an early member of the Mystic Methodist church and became its first Sunday-school superintendent in 1843, a position he held for the next twenty-five years. Later he served as a steward and trustee for his church and, in stark contrast to his family's trade in intoxicating liquors, helped organize a temperance society in Mystic.[29] With regard to politics Amos, despite his Southern exposure, was a member of the Union Party, a splinter group of war Democrats who strongly supported the federal government.[30] His eldest son, Henry Harding, was twenty and unmarried in 1861, but there is no evidence of any army service record. Upon the outbreak of hostilities, he was serving as an apprentice at the Standard Machine Shop in Mystic. Edmund, the youngest, was a child, but William Orville enlisted in the 26th Regiment of the Connecticut Volunteer Infantry in 1862 at age nineteen. His Company (K) was recruited largely from Groton.[31]

Orville's initial postings were close to home, first to Camp Russell and then Camp Buckingham, just east of Brooklyn. The terms of his enlistment, however, did not deter him from doing a bit of trading for his father. In November, as the weather turned cold, he ordered five red undershirts and four pairs of "drawers" for two of his superiors and expressed concern when immediate payment was not forthcoming.[32] Soon his unit left for a posting in the South, and Orville conveyed to his parents a vivid description of life aboard the troopship *Empire City*. Conditions for the soldiers were cramped, the men being quartered in decks that were seven feet between joints

> in three tiers of Bunks, and the whole deck being filled except the Hatch way and two narrow passage ways just wide enough for one man to pass. They sleep five to ten in a Bunk so that when the man on the inside wants to get out he has to rout out all the rest first, so you see they are stowed rather close, yet they manage to get along very well. The officers occupy the saloon, it being a very nice large room.

Possibly because he was company secretary, Orville was quartered with the officers in first-rate accommodations. Writing letters and sleeping relieved the boredom of endless hours afloat. Orville relates that he went to bed at about 4 P.M. on Saturday, 6 December, and did not awaken until the same time the next day. Despite bouts of seasickness, the men looked forward to meals.

> We are fed twice a day, in the morning at 1/2 past 8 on Coffee, Hard Bread, and boiled Ham or Beef, at 5/6 o'clock on Coffee, Hard Bread, Beef or Rice or Pork, and I wish you could see me at meal times, with a piece of Hard Bread & fat Pork in one hand, and a cup of Coffee black as your hat with no sugar or milk in the other, you would probably call it poor living, but we grow fat on it and think it tastes pretty good.

As his ship passed Charleston the warm weather allowed some men to sleep on deck, and on reaching Key West the distinctiveness of the South was further evident in the species of fish and birds "that are new to us, such as Pelicans, Flying Fish, Dolphins &c. It is quite amusing to see a large school of Flying Fish going along, when...along comes a school of Dolphins among them and then I tell you there is a scattering." On the 14th he attended religious service for the first time, "and if Old Hundred ever sounded good it did on the ships deck, sung by hundreds of voices this afternoon."[33]

By 16 December Orville's steamer headed up the Mississippi River. It was a monotonous journey, he reported, the land being "very low, resembling the marshes around Mystic, with the exception that the beach is mud instead of sand." Forts Jackson and St. Philip, the scene of a major battle earlier in the year, were "not very savage looking" but "in a good place to do a great deal of damage to any passing vessel, being situated one on each side of the River, in a very short narrow bend. They do not show the effects of the fight, having been repaired, excepting that the trees are all away from some distance around them." The riverbanks became more attractive as Orville's ship advanced to higher land, and the plantations, instead of being deserted and derelict as one might expect in conquered territory, were running

> full blast. Their Sugar Mills seem to be in full operation, and once in a while we see a vessel loading with the article. We are finding plenty to amuse us. About every half mile we find a plantation with orange groves, loaded down with nice yellow fruit and in many places they have begun to gather, and we

> see bushels of them in large heaps under the trees. The negroes come running down to the shore as we go along, hurrahing and swinging their hats, as though they were crazy.

Upon reaching the Crescent City on the 18th there were "boats, loaded with oranges and eatables along side, all the morning, and we are having quite a feast."[34] Obviously Orville was enjoying his tour of duty immensely in this strange and exotic land.

His unit's destination was Fort Parapet, just upriver from New Orleans in what is now Kenner. Originally designed to protect the city from land attack, it normally boasted about 3,500 troops under Union occupation, including some African-American units.[35] The fort occupied about sixty or seventy acres, according to Orville, and was protected on the south by earthworks with thirty to forty guns, mostly twenty-four and thirty-two pounders, and on the north by a lake, swamp, and woods. "It is about as the Rebels left it" inasmuch as "when they evacuated they destroyed all they could yet they did not have time to do much." The camp was the scene of much coming and going of regiments, including others from New England. One from Maine was engaged in picket duty extending eight or ten miles in every direction. "They occasionally fall in with some of the Rebel Guerrillas, so you see we are pretty near the enemy." But Orville was never in harm's way, and much of his time, along with other lads from Mystic, was spent in rest, recreation, and satisfying his curiosity about the local climate and culture. "Today has been as fine a one as you ever saw North," he reported in late December. "The Planters seem to have all left up in this region, and the boys are traveling all over their fields, helping themselves to any thing they want." Orville seemed especially fascinated with the blacks he encountered, probably because he had never seen any of them in Connecticut.

> We have one here to wait on us in the tent: he is about 16 years of age, and I tell you he is a true specimen. He is so black, that charcoal would make a white mark on him, and as Artemus Ward says, "goes by the euphonious cognomen" of Dick, and as about as comical a looking darkey as you ever saw. Well take it on the whole, we are having pretty gay times. I have not had the least idea of being home-sick yet.

The irony implicit in Orville's observations is that his servant, though no longer a slave, was probably held in higher regard by his former Southern master. At least he was not likely an object of ridicule. Indeed, Union soldiers had more respect for their animals.

> Horses are plenty around here. All you have to do is to make a bridal [sic] and saddle of some kind and go and catch you one, and do as you please with him, so that many of the Boys have either a horse or a mule, and I tell you there is some pretty tall racing done here. ...We have Sibley tents, and have a nice floor, two bedsteads, two tables and everything quite comfortable.

Aside from having to drill over two hours each day, Orville and his comrades were "taking things pretty easy," and he did not seem to miss being home for the holidays.[36]

For a change of pace, he told his sister he had volunteered for picket duties, but even this responsibility seemed a diversion.

> We were out thirty hours. We were divided into squads of five or six each. Our squad was stationed about three miles from Camp on a large Sugar Plantation near the Sugar Mill and it being in full operation I had a fine chance to see them make Sugar. We had a fine time with the Darkies. We got them to cook Hoe cake, Sweet Potatoes, Mackerel &c for us. I slept out of doors on the soft side of a board and slept very sound at that, excepting where I was taking my turn at standing guard. I suppose the boys will get up some kind of a time for Christmas and New Years. I would like to be there, yet I think I am in pretty good business here.
>
> There are plenty of Negroes here, and nearly all the Boys have a servant, as they are willing to serve very cheap. As you get up in the morning and look out of your Tent you will see two or three Darkies in front of each Tent blacking the boys [sic] boots, and polishing their guns.[37]

Local blacks may have been freed, but the servile condition imposed by their liberators hardly seemed much an advance from slavery.

Orville also took a twenty-four-hour furlough to the Crescent City with some friends to see the sights and eat some more delectable food. "New Orleans presents rather a deserted appearance," he told his parents,

> About half of the stores and dwellings being closed. We saw the dwelling occupied by Gen. [Ben] Butler as his Head Quarters. It is one of the nicest houses in the City. We visited Jackson Square, which is a very pretty place. In the center stands a statue of Andrew Jackson, on which is inscribed the

> words "The Union must and shall be preserved." ...We also visited the Camp of the 9th C.V. They are encamped in the central part of the City in Lafayette Square, a very pretty place. I tried to find Uncle Oliver Noyes but did not succeed.

But Orville seemed more captivated by a local black religious service than the cosmopolitan delights of the South's largest city.

> We have some of the greatest Negro meetings down this way that you ever saw. If a Darkie prays or talks too long, some other one will get up and say "Stop dat Nigger he pray long enough." At that the minister will come down and punch the "brudder" with a cane telling him to stop and give some one else a chance. They generally sing about a dozen tunes at one time, among which will be "No one to Love" "Get out of the Wilderness" or something of that sort sung by "de white folks." At the close of the meeting they have what they call a religious walk around which is for all to get up, join hands, jump up and run around, some singing, some shouting and making all sorts of noises. Although it is supposed to be quite a serious time, yet I will defy any white man to attend one and not laugh harder than he ever did before.[38]

No doubt Amos was dismayed from this account to learn that his son was attending worship services more for entertainment value than their devotional qualities.

Military realities soon intervened, however, first with a celebration of the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans on 8 January, and then with a funeral at the hospital of a young man from Company G. "I think it was the most solemn ceremony I ever witnessed," he told his brother, "the whole Regt attended. At the close of the sermon the corpse was carried through the length of the lines to the Hearse, followed by the whole drum corps, beating the long roll with muffled drums. The body is to be sent North."[39] Also impresssive to young Tift was an encampment of Zouaves who invited his company to a Washington's birthday celebration. That regiment had "the best laid out and neatest Camp in the Department," he observed. "Over every street were built large Arches and Bowers of evergreens brilliantly illuminated with fancy Chinese lanterns of all colors." At every street entrance there was design made of Turf shells and flowers. One featured "a plan of the Monitor at another a shield and eagle and so on, all illuminated." There was also a large stage where evening speeches, singing, and instrumental performances were held under lanterns. On another occasion Orville

"attended a Negro wedding" at the quarters of an officer who was "overseer of the colonies of Negroes. It was a gay affair the bride and bridesmaids were dressed in white. [T]he bride groom with white pants and vest and if you could only have seen them put on the airs. ...[O]n our way home we stopped at a Negro dance in one of the colonies. They were having a regular essence of Old Virginia."[40] Although he could have scarcely realized it, it was ironic that Orville was experiencing such gaiety so near the site of his uncles' recent misfortune—and in service of the other side.

Several months later, however, another side of the war became evident to Orville during his posting at a military hospital in Baton Rouge, which was receiving casualties from Union assaults on nearby Port Hudson. His regiment "did some splendid fighting and every one speaks highly of it." He told his parents that he had been up all night and was in charge of a room of about twenty wounded men. "Three with arms amputated and three with legs. The others wounded in different ways it kept me pretty busy to attend to them all." He anticipated being home soon, depending on the outcome of the next assault, but he was "almost afraid to hear from P.H. for when we do it is more than probably that Mystic will have some others to mourn for." Indeed a casualty list on 22 June included twenty-nine dead, 102 wounded, and one soldier missing from the 26th regiment, and four dead and eleven wounded from Company K since 27 May.[41] There is no indication that Orville or any Tifts on either side ever saw actual combat. The family was extremely lucky to escape unscathed in this bloodiest of American wars.

Upon his discharge in 1863, Orville, with his brother Henry, took a position with the merchant marine, delivering troops and stores to Union outposts enforcing the blockade that his uncles had tried so desperately to break. This work at sea, by now a family tradition, was pleasing to Orville. In September 1864, after transporting 330 troops from bases near New York City to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, he told his parents that his captain (named Cooley) was "a first rate fellow. ...I am gay and festive...and like it first rate so far[.] [I] was a little sea sick but only lost one meal." While waiting at anchor offshore for further orders, Orville took the opportunity to socialize and engage in private business with officers on other vessels and at the fort.

> There being quite a large fleet here and our Captain being well acquainted we have fine times visiting[.] I was ashore this morning and met Capt Frank Holmes of the Idaho[.] ...It is reported that there is to be an exchange of our prisoners now confined in Georgia and that is where we are going. I think I did very well on this trip as I sold out every thing I had for the owners[.] I took in $900.00 which is a pretty good business for two days after selling out[.] I made $75.00 for myself but you need not say anything about it to anybody.[42]

That Orville was thinking more about business than the war is evident also in some advice he offered his father. "I see that gold Cotton &c are falling off in price so I think you had better be a little cautious about buying. If you are busy in the Store you had better get more help."[43] This last comment suggests that business was good for Amos too. It was business as usual, or perhaps even better than usual, for the Northern Tifts.[44]

For the Georgia Tifts it was business too but within the context of serving the Southern cause. After the loss of *The Atlanta*, Nelson and Asa returned to Albany for the rest of the war. Since December 1861, despite their prolonged absences, the Tift brothers were suppliers for Confederate naval installations at Mobile, Selma, Savannah, and Charleston. Again Nelson's dedication to the cause, as assistant naval paymaster, was evident. On his property he constructed a three-story steam flour and corn mill that could provide a hundred bushels of flour and four hundred bushels of meal daily. Eventually his supply depot included a bakery, a cooperage, a blacksmith shop, a kiln for drying corn, a slaughterhouse, and a tannery at nearby Palmyra. All of this equipage, according to a federal agent's report after the war, was "fitted up in a good manner, steam engines, tools &c every way suitable for the business."[45]

Such a profusion of production facilities, which also supplied the army, is hardly surprising in light of the agricultural abundance of Southwest Georgia and its remoteness from the battlefront. Data compiled by Roland Harper indicate that of the nine agricultural districts of Lower Georgia, the lands of the Albany area produced more bushels of corn, more bales of cotton, and a greater value of slaughtered animals per farm than any other region. It also had the most improved acres and highest valued livestock per farm and the largest proportion of blacks (63%) to whites (37%) in 1860. The average in this latter category for the other regions was 45% to 56%

respectively. "The real heartland of antebellum Georgia was the central and southwestern region, the land of cotton and corn and slaves," is the view of historian F. N. Boney.

> From here came the main force of the statewide agricultural surge which by 1860 was producing bountiful harvests even in secondary crops: almost a million pounds of tobacco, more than a million bushels of sweet potatoes (a world record), over two and a half million pounds of honey, over a million bushels of oats, over a million and a half pounds of butter, increasing quantities of fruit, and even a trickle of domestic wine.

It was a tribute to the Tifts, especially Nelson, that Albany became known as the "gateway" for this "Egypt of the Confederacy."[46]

Whether Nelson took undue advantage of this largesse by profiteering, as alleged in a recent book on Civil War Georgia, seems debatable. The authors contend that Tift, "to pay for his construction projects...increased both the tolls on his bridge and his prices on corn and other supplies." Furthermore, his sale of corn to local citizens at an inflated price of sixteen dollars, "six dollars above even speculation rates—brought scarcely veiled threats of retaliation, and citizens finally burned the bridge house to the ground." Nelson, the authors conclude, "was but one example of the planter-merchant-speculators who preyed on their neighbors all over Georgia and the South."[47] These accusations seem unduly harsh. First, any direct connection between Nelson's alleged price gouging (1865) and the bridge house fire (1870) seems dubious given the time span, and it was the bridge, not the "bridge house," that was burned—most likely to the river and not "to the ground"! Additionally the authors fail to include an April 1865 rationale from Nelson, which sheds a different light on his actions.

> The tolls accruing from the operations of the mills are more than sufficient to supply the requirements of the Navy. Between three and four thousand bushels of this surplus has been turned over to Captain John A. Davis for the army. Recently—the Treasury having failed to supply the funds to pay off the men whose families are dependent on them for support—I have been selling some of the surplus tolls at the market price to pay the expenses of these establishments. I regret the present high price of corn and other necessaries of life, and am willing personally to do what I can to relieve the destitute. But as an agent of the Government, I have no authority to gratify my sympathies by the use of its means or property.

Nelson's conduct must also be viewed within a broader context of deteriorating social and economic conditions of the time. "Almost every male inhabitant...is on the 'make,'" reported the *Patriot* in March 1865, "and although they don't use brass 'knucks' to rob you of the last 'Confed,' they confront you with...their devilish penetration."[48] Especially since Nelson received no compensation for his services to the Confederacy, it would not have been surprising if he, like many others, had done a bit of hustling, but there is no evidence of it. Furthermore, were it not for his entrepreneurial energy, leading to the development of the region over previous decades, there would have been far fewer resources for everyone to exploit. In any case, it was the Northern Tifts, more than the Southern Tifts, who were conspicuous for their war profiteering.

At the end of the war, the myriad manufacturing enterprises of the Tifts were seized by Union forces. Most Albanians were allowed to take an amnesty oath, but as a prominent military and civic leader who owned property over $20,000 in value, Nelson had to secure a parole and file an appeal to President Andrew Johnson for a pardon.

> When the late secession of Georgia was under discussion I used my best efforts, public & private, to prevent, first in my own county & subsequently at the capital of the state, where I met & co-operated with Hon. Judge [James Moore] Wayne, Hon H V. Johnston [sic] & others.
>
> Though the ordinance of Georgia was adopted against my will & against my vote, I considered myself bound by duty and necessity to obey it as the law of my state, and to share the fate of her citizens.[49]

However much these statements depict Nelson's prewar position on secession, they hardly reflect the spirit of his commitment to the South and issues that fueled the break. Nor do they speak for the secessionist stance of his brother. So far as slavery and states rights were concerned, Nelson and Asa were as earnest and outspoken as any native Southerner. Nelson's appeal, though successful, was disingenuous. Likely the real views of the Tifts coincided with some postwar sentiments about Republicans expressed by their friend Stephen Mallory. "We are as different from them as oil is from water, & we can no more mingle harmoniously together than can an African 'tom-tom' & an Aeolian harp." Southerners, he believed, were "superior to

ninety nine in every hundred of them; superior in all respects—in heart, soul, mind, life, & character, & in the love & estimation of noble Southern friends."[50] Like Mallory, the Tifts had roots and relatives in the North, and though they never shared with him the humiliation of imprisonment for their Southern loyalty, their conversion and commitment to their adopted land and aversion to Republicans bore striking similarities.

The most serious problem the Tifts and others in the white establishment faced was how to deal with newly liberated slaves. The most immediate issue confronting both races was the terms of employment under a new system of contractual labor subject to oversight by the Freedman's Bureau. Disputes were inevitable, and included among the bureau's records are complaints against Nelson and other employers and orders to pay their black employees.[51] In self-defense, they formed a citizens committee and in June 1867 addressed a counter grievance to O. H. Howard, head of the Albany subdivision.

> The freedmen have worked contentedly and well according to contracts until recently when misrepresentation has excited false hopes and engendered discontent. Many of them now neglect their work, are disrespectful to their employers, go armed with guns and pistols, exercise military drill on the plantations or leave their work & go to town without the consent or against the orders of their employers.
>
> They say that they are ordered by men who represent themselves as speaking for the Government, to exercise in military drill and to attend political meetings under penalty of a fine. They have also been told and profess to believe that the time is near at hand, when they will take possession of the Government, divide the property of the Country among themselves, and have every thing as they desire.

That some understanding of the employers' plight existed within the bureau is evident in a report of agent Charles Rauschenberg of nearby Cuthbert later in the year.

> The white man complains generally that the freedman is lazy, impudent and unreliable, that he will not fulfill his contract any further than it suits his convenience, that he claims the right to loose [sic] as much time as he pleases and when he pleases but wants full rations all the time, that he owes for goods and provisions more than his wages or his part of the crop amount and he wants to quit his employment on account of it; the freedman on the other

> hand complains that the white man has made him sign a contract which he does not understand to mean what the white man says it does mean, that the white man wants him to do work which he did not contract to do, that the employer does not want to furnish him rations, that he charges him too much for lost time, that he curses him, threatens to whip him or has really struck him or shot at him.

Rauschenberg understood, perhaps better than other agents, the difficult transition from slavery, particularly in adjusting to the expedient practice of sharecropping where both races were trying to gain the upper hand. He concluded that "a great deal of bad material exists in both races and that both in reality have much cause to complain of each other."[52]

While whites had an advantage in this power struggle by virtue of their superior wealth, education, and social status, blacks vastly outnumbered them in Dougherty County, a critical factor in the all-important political front. Repudiation of state debts, abolition of slavery, repeal of the secession ordinance, and promulgation of a new constitution by a state convention in October 1865 seemed appropriate steps for readmission to the Union, but Georgia's refusal to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment granting citizenship to blacks led to an imposition of military reconstruction in 1867. When it appeared that radical reconstructionists in Dougherty County, supported by a black majority at the polls, were about to seize control, white leaders took action.[53] In December, Nelson led an Albany contingent to Macon to form the Conservative movement, which declared reconstruction a "crime." He became a member of the new party's executive committee and later addressed a mass meeting in Albany "with great effect...urging organization and activity for the safety of the country." A report from another committee he headed warned that the government was about "to be placed in the custody and control of negroes. ...In the name of all that is sacred and good, we protest against this step towards barbarism—this crime against civilization." The *Albany News* exhorted readers to "organize" against the Radicals. "We tell you now, your house is on fire, and the robber band is plundering your store houses, and destroying your liberties! A-wake! Sound the alarms! Arouse from your lethargy! ...Put out the fire, and drive the foul despoilers of your peace and prosperity to their hiding places."[54] In *Confederate Industry*, Harold Wilson calls Nelson one of the South's "quintessential 'redeemers'" and "an important element in challenging the Radicals and ushering in the restored governments under local white

control."[55] As Asa had taken the lead during the secessionist struggle at the outset of the war, Nelson became the family's foremost defender of Southern rights in its aftermath.

There is no evidence that Nelson was active in the Ku Klux Klan, the terrorist counterpart of the Conservatives, but he did make the upstairs of his bridge house available for its regular meetings "Over the Arch," thereby making Tift and his property a focal point of racial controversy.[56] Philip Joiner, Albany's newly elected black member of the Georgia House of Representatives, led the opposition to Nelson, and it took the form of a protest against his charges of bridge patrons.[57] Having avoided an 1864 Superior Court *quo warranto* proceeding, Nelson also violated an 1868 act, secured by Joiner, to adhere to his charter. Finally, in July 1870 Joiner introduced a bill to revoke Tift's franchise.[58] By one retrospective estimate, "the bridge controversy demonstrated just how powerful Nelson Tift was...and how fragile black political power was during and after Reconstruction." It is hardly surprising that black conspirators, failing to gain justice by mid-August, should burn the bridge across the Flint—a "dastardly, villainous and cowardly" act directed against the kingpin of the white establishment.[59]

However, the climax in Nelson's role of powerbroker for Southern rights occurred on the national level. In 1868 he overcame the Republican/black voting bloc to get elected representative of Georgia's second (twenty-two county) congressional district. According to William Warren Rogers, Jr. in his analysis of the contest, it occurred despite the fact that blacks exceeded whites by 106,000 to 77,000 and were four times as numerous in Dougherty County. Furthermore, Freedmen's Bureau records indicate a climate of potential violence. Andrew Clark, an official in neighboring Baker County, observed increasing attacks on blacks since the onset of voter registration. "I am in the worst section of Georgia." From Albany, C. C. Hicks reported that local whites showed no respect for the national government and intended to destroy the Union League. "*If any place* is in need of *martial* law this is one."[60] Nevertheless, Nelson adopted a "paternalistic outlook" and consciously courted the black vote, thereby tacitly accepting black suffrage. He advised "our colored friends" that Democrats were "their only true friends." They would be best served by following "the white people of the South, among whom they are raised."[61] Whether these platitudes won many black votes is doubtful. It seems more likely that

Nelson's opponent, Richard Whiteley of Decatur County, lost far more black votes from the many instances of intimidation and fraud that plagued the election. Nevertheless Tift, carrying fourteen counties, won by 12,890 to 11,736 votes. "These results defied all political logic and probability" is Rogers's conclusion.[62]

To his credit, Nelson used his position to further railroad links with Albany, and he introduced bills to promote commerce through newspaper advertising, extend the bankruptcy law, regulate banking and currency, and to provide a sinking fund for the public debt. But his most noteworthy undertaking was to stymie the efforts of Republican Governor Rufus Bullock to secure a return of martial law and yet another reconstruction for Georgia. Bullock's impetus arose from a serious loss of Republican votes in the 1868 election, which he attributed to intimidation and violence. Unlike Tift, Bullock, also a Northerner and businessman, decided to "take sides with the negroes in their contest with the white people of the state," notes Numan Bartley.[63] Nelson's strategy was to get Georgia's legislature to submit a resolution referring the question of the right of blacks to hold public office to the state Supreme Court, with right of appeal to the US Supreme Court. On arriving in Washington he lobbied members of the Congressional Reconstruction Committee to approve such a plan.[64] He also gained the trust of General George Meade, commander of the military district that includeed Georgia, and President-elect Ulysses Grant. The former sympathized with those who "differed with the extreme men of the Republican party" and counseled Grant to take a conciliatory line. He hoped Congress would "let these people alone, and let them work out their own case."[65] Although Grant was averse to advising either Congress or Georgia's legislature, it was clear to Nelson that he was "opposed to another recon-struction." Grant agreed that "the question of the rights of colored citizens should be submitted to the courts," and was "decidedly opposed to any interference with Georgia by Congress."[66]

Nelson's encounters with Bullock, however, were far less satisfactory. "I am satisfied that he is a heartless, selfish partisan schemer," he concluded. He accused the governor of operating a slander mill, telegraphing to the *Augusta Chronicle* "new falsehoods about outrages and using every means to excite Congress to overturn the State government."[67] To counter his influence, Nelson sent a questionnaire to "the best citizens of the state," asking whether they believed all Georgians had received equal protection and security.

"Predictably," notes Bullock's biographer, "respondents almost uniformly answered that no violence or even discrimination existed in Georgia." In rebutting Tift's representations, Bullock denied that the state had complied fully with federal mandates and questioned the poll's validity. When the Reconstruction Committee approved on 30 March 1869 a bill proposed by Bullock and radical Congressman Benjamin Butler for a new reconstruction, Nelson pronounced it "despotism."[68]

With the inauguration of Georgia's third reconstruction in December, the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified and the fourteenth reratified. A military board allowed many Republicans, including blacks, who had been defeated or excluded in the 1868 election to reclaim their seats and disqualified numerous Democrats. Nelson expressed outrage at Bullock's success in vilifying southern whites, displaying "an effrontery which would make Satan smile." He could not think of "a single important statement" made by the governor about conditions in Georgia "which has not been exaggerated or false." Bullock was a "petty tyrant." A critical test of strength between the Democratic forces for Southern rights and their Republican adversaries emerged in 1870 with the latter's nomination of Richard Whiteley to challenge Nelson for his second district seat. The contrasting portrayals of the *Albany News*, an establishment organ, could not have been more striking. Whereas Tift was honored for having "done more to defeat Radicalism and for Georgia than any five or ten men put together," Whiteley was portrayed as an interloper, a scoundrel, and a coward. "A deeper disgrace could never be put on the good people of the South than by admitting this monstrous humbug."[69] Nelson again made a pitch for ex-slave votes, and even told audiences that he and his brother employed two thousand of them. "More than most southern Democrats, Tift made a genuine appeal to blacks" is how William Rogers describes the campaign. According to one witness, he made "a 'decided impression' among the 'better class' of freedmen," but nothing could dispel the deep racial divisions that permeated the district.[70]

In the ensuing election, held in late December 1870, Whiteley carried the counties with large black majorities, including Dougherty, but Tift claimed a majority of five hundred. Although he obtained a certificate from Secretary of State David Cotting to this effect, Bullock disallowed the results, citing irregularities in five counties, and declared Whiteley the winner. In an atmosphere charged with politics and race, the protests of Nelson and his

supporters against Bullock's actions became vicious and personal. When warned by a colleague that Bullock was a large man and could whip him, Nelson replied that "he could never do it—that his guilt whipped one half and I could whip the other." The *Albany News* castigated Bullock for "shamefully" awarding the seat to Whiteley, calling him a "blatherskite white-livered dog."[71] Rogers's verdict, in his analysis of the adjudication process that persisted for three months, was that Tift could rightly claim that "political considerations had figured prominently in the outcome" and that "Bullock took liberties with precedent, the state constitution, and the Georgia Code."[72]

Notwithstanding a vindication of his actions by Congress, Bullock had to endure the humiliation of being driven from office within six months under threat of impeachment and later undergoing trial for larceny and swindling. Bullock failed to ingratiate himself with the dominant culture of the Empire State of the South. That Tift, on the other hand, enjoyed acceptance and the reputation of "esteemed fellow citizen" is understandable from his comments on a measure before Congress in early 1871 to curb the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. "It must be beaten in the Senate," he observed. "It is a monstrous bill."[73] Lest Nelson's stalwart defense of Southern traditions and rights escape recognition, a contemporary account contended that "his labors at Washington in behalf of his State and his section have never been fully appreciated by the people of Georgia. It was through his instrumentality that the reconstruction in Georgia was divested of fully one-half its horrors and humiliations."[74]

After his forced departure from public office in 1871, Nelson became increasingly involved in business and civic affairs, but he remained bitter and declined his party's renomination the following year. "In this last election," he told a convention in Albany, "you were deprived of the services in Congress of your elected representative by perjury and fraud, but the recorded exposure of the compound villainies by which the deed was accomplished, will be a perpetual badge of infamy to the authors and a warning to others." Whiteley retained his seat in the ensuing election, but Philip Joiner lost his House seat. "Redeemed! Disenthralled! Dougherty County Black No More!" was the enthusiastic headline of the Albany paper. Yet a legacy of fear remained, as evident from a suspicious incident reported just before the 1874 election during which two ladies were "accosted by a negro scoundrel, and boldly confronted with the declaration: 'I intend to

marry one of you—the time has come for negro men to take white wives, and you can't help yourselves.'" This encounter, which nearly led to a lynching, was labeled "Whiteley's Doctrine Working to Its Logic."[75] Nelson never subscribed to the doctrine of racial equality, but it was evident in his centennial address on 4 July 1876 that he was at last reconciled to the end of slavery. He reasoned that "the negro had performed his mission of usefulness," that "the time had arrived for abolition," and slavery was "an obstruction to the immigration of white settlers, to the introduction of foreign capital, to the diversity of industries, which are so necessary to the prosperity and independence of a State." Yet he was probably as responsible as anyone for enforcing the color line in Albany. As a Wisconsin visitor noted in 1881, although blacks clearly held a numerical superiority in the city and county, "the whites keep them pretty well at arm's length, and there is nothing approaching social equality in any way."[76]

This accommodation with the racial attitudes of their adopted land became a legacy at least of the Southern Tifts, but it was hardly the only characteristic that shaped their activities during the Civil War and its aftermath. Despite their wholehearted commitment to slavery, secession, and redemption, Nelson, Asa, and to a lesser extent Charles exhibited a kind of ingenuity, energy, and organization that was not so evident among Southerners. These were characteristics recognized by General Mercer as crucial to the ultimate outcome of the war. "We certainly lack the systematic organization of the Yankees," he lamented,

> our Quarter Master, Commissary and Medical Departments are very inferior to theirs; they possess a splendidly organized system of transportation, organized medical & infirmary corps, corps of sharp shooters with telescopic rifles, engineer corps, corps of sappers & miners &c. &c. In fact the Yankees are eminently a business people, and pay great attention to details.[77]

Indeed business was by now the hallmark of the Tifts and was the leading trait that bound together the two branches of the family. Despite generations of stories, there is no evidence of ill feelings between Northern and Southern Tifts or that Hannah, the family matriarch, ever had to preside over a postwar peacemaking session. Mystic was still home, and members of the Southern branch continued to make pilgrimages there. But it was becoming obvious that Southern members of the family, owing largely to the entrepreneurial initiatives of Nelson, were the most enterprising and dynamic

and that the South, despite its defeat and exploitation, offered the greatest opportunities for Northern kinfolk who wanted to escape the staid and settled life of New England.

4

New Tifts in the New South

We have learned that one northern immigrant is worth fifty foreigners; and have smoothed the path to southward, wiped out the place where Mason and Dixon's line used to be, and hung out our latchstring to you and yours. ...We have established thrift in city and country. We have fallen in love with work. We have restored comfort to homes from which culture and elegance never departed. We have let economy take root and spread among us as rank as the crabgrass which sprung from Sherman's cavalry camps, until we are ready to lay odds on the Georgia Yankee as he manufactures relics of the battlefield in a one-story shanty and squeezes pure olive oil out of his cotton seed, against any down-easter that ever swapped wooden nutmegs for flannel sausage in the valleys of Vermont.[1] —Henry Grady

Regular communication and interaction resumed between the Northern and Southern Tifts after the Civil War. Notwithstanding occasional misunderstandings, all family members seemed civil and supportive. Their contacts were facilitated by the fact that Asa was in the shipping business and that Nelson had a hand in making Albany a railroad center. Their civility was most evident in relations with Amos Chapman, whose fortunes declined markedly after the war. In a brief visit to Albany on his way back North in January 1876, Amos wrote to his wife that when he arrived the previous evening he found "open hand and heart—and blazing fire waiting to receive me." His breakfast with Asa was "good company I greatly enjoyed."[2] Ironically, the Tifts who were on the losing side proved to be the biggest gainers with the onset of peace. So attractive were the prospects for development in the South that Amos's sons, Henry, Orville, and Edmund, like their father and grandfather, left New England and came to the region where their Uncle Nelson had laid the basis for new family fortunes. This generation would have a dynamic effect on the development of South Georgia and give the Tifts a lasting imprint in the South.

These changes could hardly have been predicted, especially considering the uncertain state of postbellum Albany. "We had our troubles," Nelson admitted. Cotton prices plummeted "from 45 cents per lb. in 1865–1866 to 8 cents in 1867, and brought disaster and bankruptcy to many of our people. Then came the Homestead, and other demoralizing laws, which tended to destroy confidence and credit." But deprivation was hardly evident in an 1866 *Patriot* article entitled "Improvements in the City." Nearly every business building was "filled with merchandize, produce, or something of a trade and barter character. We don't remember ever to have seen as many goods of different kinds offered in our markets."[3] When the telegraph came to Albany in 1866, the *Patriot* was jubilant. "If no one will cry 'success to us,' we are determined to sing it out for ourselves, and to 'push along.'" In 1867 seventeen buildings were constructed, and when fire devastated the business district, it was quickly rebuilt. By 1870 there was a building and loan association, a board of trade, and a charter in place for a bank. Railroads were converging on the city from all directions. The *Albany News* predicted it was "bound to become the Atlanta of Southern Georgia."[4] Like Atlanta, Savannah, Augusta, and Columbus, cities studied in Mary DeCredico's *Patriotism for Profit*, Albany exhibited an outburst of energy among its "urban mobilizers." These entrepreneurs, formerly "recognized for their exploits on behalf of Confederate independence," now sought "to 'out-Yankee the Yankee'...to rebuild the state."[5]

The Albany entrepreneur who most fully exhibited that Yankee spirit of drive, eventually articulated in the New South ethos, was Nelson Tift. "Industry and economy" were keys to his philosophy of success, and by early 1866 he established a cotton and wool factory on the site of his Confederate bakery. Already producing 300 yards of twills daily, he hoped to add four more looms to reach 500 yards. Later that year Nelson and Asa built a huge (480' x 200') warehouse near the railroad depot, which the *Patriot* called "the largest in the State." With a railroad track extended into it "by its enterprising proprietors," it was the most economical facility for storing and shipping cotton "to be found anywhere." What fed this immense structure was the agricultural bounty of lands around Albany and its reviving cotton culture. The region continued to produce more cotton, corn, and livestock of greater value, and more improved farm acreage, than any other area of Lower Georgia. The rising proportion of blacks to whites from 51/49% (1850) to 63/37% (1860) to 73/27% (1870) is indicative of an economy still

dependent on field workers.[6] Lee Formwalt shows that planter persistence in Southwest Georgia was "not affected" by the Civil War and subsequent economic depression. Nelson Tift, beyond his extensive urban assets, was the region's second wealthiest planter with real estate holdings valued at $100,000 in 1870, $30,000 higher than in 1850. By 1881, according to Henry Grady, the planters were "still lords of acres, though not of slaves."[7] Having to divest his slave holdings was a major loss for Nelson, but he was the wealthiest and most powerful man in Southwest Georgia at war's end.

No less successful was Asa Tift. Despite losing his slave assets, he was able to recover his significant property holdings in Key West and, along with brother Charles, resume his business enterprises. A city census taken in 1873 shows that William Curry, with independent real estate assets of $152,000, was by far the island's richest man. But Asa, with $50,000 in assets of his own and $84,000 owned jointly with Curry and $20,000 with Charles, was the second richest.[8] Asa also owned considerable properties in Albany, including a second home and a business he operated with Nelson, N. & A. F. Tift Warehouse and Commission Merchants. When household goods, animals, boats, and investments are added to these myriad enterprises, Asa's worth was possibly as high as $200,000, a princely sum in those days in the South. The most lucrative enterprise for Asa and Charles was shipping, where they served as agents for the New York and Baltimore Steam Ship Lines. As suppliers for the bonded warehouses of Key West, their business connections were "extensive," according to the local newspaper.

> They claim, and with good reason, that their facilities as Steam Ship agents, are superior to any in the country. They pay no insurance, having a Steam Fire Engine with which they can flood any of their buildings with either fresh or sea water, at a few minutes' notice, beside, their principal buildings are strictly fire-proof as was shown when more than one hundred buildings burned up.[9]

Newspaper ads in 1873 indicate that Tift ships (*State of Texas*, *City of Austin*, *City of San Antonio*, and the *Corondelette*) totaled 5,761 tons, and were carrying freight, passengers, and mail between New York, Baltimore, Havana, Key West, and New Orleans. The brothers also imported ice from New England, which they sold at two cents a pound. In 1876 there was an

ad for 5,000 gallons of water, collected from a cistern on the roof of the Tift building.[10] Both commodities were in short supply in this salty tropical environment, and the Tifts provided a valuable service to improve the quality of life. As the island continued to grow in population, from 3,000 in 1860 to 12,000 in 1870, the Key West Tifts prospered.[11]

Misfortune, however, continued to plague the personal lives of Asa and Charles. In 1861 the latter lost a nine-year-old daughter, Julia, and in 1873 his younger son, William, age twenty-four, died. Both were buried in Mystic.[12] But the greatest tragedy was the loss of Asa's daughter Annie to tuberculosis in Massachusetts in 1869. It was "a severe shock" for Charles and his wife Julia who "loved her very dearly." Others too were deeply moved by the death of Asa's eldest child, aged only nineteen. "Truly God's ways are incomprehensible," wrote Stephen Mallory's wife Angela, "just to think that the only one on earth that poor Asa has to cheer his old age is now taken from him." She was "determined to write him and express my condolences...but I have not yet had the nerve to undertake the task."[13] But Charles and even Asa, seemingly hardened by so many tragedies, viewed her death more philosophically. "I am glad to see by Asa's letters, that he appears to take proper views of his sad loss," Charles confided to Amos. "It is better for the poor child—I am certain. ...May we all be as well prepared!" In fact, Charles was too busy to attend the funeral in Mystic. "We can't afford to leave" inasmuch as "business is better for the present, as several leaky & wrecked vessels have been (and are now) in port."[14] Nor did Asa make any lifestyle changes. Upon returning, he immersed himself in his work and lived alone in the mansion he had built after the war with timber from Georgia and marble from Italy.[15] Stephen Whalton, son of Asa's business manager, recalls his solitary existence. "A colored woman who worked for him cooked all of his meals at her home and brought them in a covered basket to the house."[16] The picture that emerges of Asa in this era is that he became even more aloof, totally committed to his business in a routine broken only by occasional visits to Albany and Mystic.

At the same time the Southern Tifts were enjoying unprecedented prosperity, their Northern brother had fallen on lean times. In May 1871 Amos declared bankruptcy. "I am sorry to hear that you will be obliged to close up," responded his devoted son Orville,

> but at the same time think it the best thing you can do. Now my idea is this. Use all the means you have to spare to reduce your Mystic indebtedness first then let your N York creditors get what they can as they can better afford to lose. By all means fix mother all right first. I will send you some money between now and the time your note of C Gunnills comes due. Make the best arrangement you can with your Mystic Creditors and I will help you reduce them as I can spare the money at present. I hardly know what I am making, but my prospects are I think better than ever before and there is no reason to suppose but that I can spare you some money from time to time. Now do not let this matter annoy you. ...Think that smarter men than you have failed in business.[17]

This failure reawakened in Amos an interest in the South where he had once prospered. But on a visit in spring 1872, his first in over three decades, he found Key West to be a strange land where old friends were "few and far between" and "few of the old land marks" remained. Amos felt "sad and joyous in turns." Two years later, following the Panic of 1873, he came for a longer stay to tap the island's opportunities for quick money and assistance from his kin. Unlike his earlier letters to Phebe, there is little yearning for Mystic or even his family and much talk about business and financial affairs. On arriving at Key West in November, Amos was encouraged by the prospect of employment with his brother Charles and lodgings in "Asa's room over the office where I shall be very pleasantly situated." At age sixty-six, Amos could recall the joys of youth he was denied on assuming marital status. "Already I feel a 'stirring within me,'" he told Phebe, "such as I have not experienced for a long time, and the reasons are many and obvious, and if in coming here, the *rust of my energies should get rubbed off*—the change will not have been in vain." On a more serious note, Amos instructed Phebe on how to handle their affairs in Mystic. He was going to send her $50 to cover bills and intended to clear over $200 dollars to help meet family expenses. On returning to Mystic in the spring he expected "to do a 'big business' in the way of my profession! Now don't everything look hopeful and encouraging."[18] A further form of hope stemmed from the newfound success of his sons, Henry in the timber business in Georgia, and Orville in the Texas cattle trade, both of whom were expected to send periodic remittances to their parents.

There is also a sense of detachment from the financial and family responsibilities of Mystic that pervades Amos's observations of life in Key

West—a sort of vacation from reality. In November 1874, he witnessed a Baltimore boat being loaded with "10 Tons Coal, a supply of water and about 60 Boxes Segars (5000 each) and a quantity of refuse Tobacco in Bales going to N Y to be made up into snuff." Charles took him to a tobacco factory that employed "600 Men and Women to work out the problem how to generate smoke at the largest expense." He also commented to Phebe on 1 December that there were a great many coconut trees on the island, but surprisingly oranges and other tropical fruits were more expensive than in New York. Another interesting feature was the use of goat teams driven by young boys of ten or twelve. He told his youngest daughter Annie that the goats were not as large as a Newfoundland dog and had

> long flat horns bending back over their heads, are quick in their movements and are very strong and appear to submit to their work with patience and resignation. The little cart is made up of a box placed on one axle and two wooden wheels. The Boys almost invariably ride in the box, and often have several bundles, making in all a load such as you would not think it possible such a little thing could draw. A good many come here for Ice, most of the Ice that is retailed is in cakes of 10, 15, & 25 cents.

He also told Annie that he recently saw a twelve-year-old boy at Sunday school who was not as big as Tom Thumb, and heard about a fifteen-year-old girl who was even smaller. "I don't know but I might make some money by exhibiting her in Mystic and elsewhere." But his foremost message to his daughter, as for the rest of his children, was to "follow what the *Bible* teaches, be steadfast in one's duty to the Heavenly Father."[19]

Health too remained an obsession from his earlier stay in the Keys, but his foremost passion was still religion, and on 14 December he gave Phebe a report on the local churches. The Episcopal church he had helped found in the 1830s was "the leading church" in intelligence and wealth, but the Methodist Episcopal church was the largest. Amos, sometimes accompanied by Charles and his wife, worshiped with these two congregations and even taught Sunday school, enjoying it immensely. The Methodists, largely Bahamians, were "comparatively ignorant," not having the advantages of education. But it was the two small black churches, Methodist and Baptist, that most fascinated him. On his way home from church on 13 December he witnessed

a most *novel* exhibition (to my eyes) of Baptism by Immersion—of two negro women. There must have been at least 500 persons present, several of the members of the church with their preacher and a larger crowd, came down to the shore singing in their quaint-peculiar style, and as soon as they arrived engaged in a variety of exercises which occupied a long time, and as I was standing in the *hot* sun I became quite impatient, but my curiosity overcame that, and I resolved to witness the close of the exercises. Soon...the two candidates with two administrators walked off from the shore quite a distance until they reached a spot where there was sufficient depth, and after waiting quite a time (the women in the mean time screaming at the top of their voices in ejaculations, and twisting their bodies into all sorts of shapes) were finally plunged under water, and as they lifted up—such screams and such contortions of body, from head to foot, swaying and throwing their heads and arms about, that it was almost impossible for their spiritual advisers (and they were strong men) to do any thing with them, and in fact, one of the women (she was quite large) when about one third the distance from the shore—all of a sudden—appeared to go off in a swoon, when a large negro rushed off, took her up bodily in his arms and brought her to shore—amid the ejaculations and shouts and songs of the brethren and sisters.

To Amos these irregular religious rites were a "farce" and "appeared to be put on for *effect*, and yet, I would not *judge*!" No less peculiar and different from his native New England was the weather. On 27 December, when the temperature was 81 degrees in Key West, he heard from a friend that it was 40 below zero in New Hampshire—a difference of 121 degrees.[20] That such distinctions were so striking indicated that Amos, unlike his brothers, was still very much a Northerner.

Although his presence in Key West was temporary, Amos had many duties, filling in for one of Asa's employees who was elected to the Florida legislature. He also assisted in remodeling Asa's office by painting it and laying a new oilcloth carpet. "This I attend to without materially interfering with my regular duties," he told Phebe. In early March he reported that "we are now discharging 300 tons hard coal. The other day received the same amount in soft coal. Charles has ordered another cargo of Ice. Our sales averaged $50 per day. I am cut out for the business as I am *naturally* up in time to attend to it." After Phebe made a sizeable deposit to their Mystic account, Amos shared the news with his sister Elizabeth. "Don't you think we are getting rich pretty fast—another $1000 dollars added to our already

large estate." He did not appear to mind playing a subservient role to his younger brothers in a business he once headed, perhaps because the experiment of going South to recoup his family's finances was working.[21]

It is difficult to assess Amos's standing, but his liquid assets could not have been great since he had an indebtedness of $260 when he left Connecticut, and his estimated income there for January was $435, with bills amounting to $220. Sons Orville and Henry assisted with contributions of $50 and $75, showing respective degrees of their prosperity. Additionally Charles was paying him $75 or $80 a month, "which is certainly very generous, especially considering that my expenses are nothing," he told Phebe. What is most evident is how closeknit and supportive the family members were of each other, despite the distances separating them. And while Amos obviously enjoyed the romance of his sojourn to Key West, he was inevitably drawn back to Mystic. Religion played no small part in this attraction. Every Sunday his thoughts returned to "home, the church, and Sunday School," enabling him to gain freedom from "business cares" and "to commune with those I love. ...The good old times being at home are repeated here, and...you know something of my *weakness* in this important department of religious worship." His "weakness," however, was likely also his strength and sustenance. And while business was necessary, it was religion and family that gave him comfort and identity, a distinction not noticeable in his Southern kin who, ironically, displayed more Yankee qualities in their approach to business. For them it was possible to shape a new and better world, but for Amos fate was in control. Thus by the end of his stay he was able to conclude "it was providential that I came out here."[22]

While Amos again retreated to New England and the intimacy of his family and the heavenly spirit, his sons—Henry, Orville, and even Edmund—displayed an increased interest in business and the world beyond Mystic. By this time the risks were lesser and the prospects for reward seemed greater. Henry was the first to leave. After finishing his machinist's apprenticeship in Mystic, where he earned $1.50 per week, he found more remunerative and adventurous employment with the C. H. Mallory Shipping Line as steamship engineer on vessels sailing from New York to Galveston, Key West, and Apalachicola, even before the war ended. From this experience he earned the sobriquet of "Captain," much as his uncle Nelson was known as "The Colonel."[23] Orville showed even greater promise. Soon after the war he and his cousin Charles Noyes, who had been with Nelson

and Asa in New Orleans, took positions as pursers with the Mallory Line. At first he was engaged in the New York to Savannah trade, then later on the Galveston to Key West run.[24] The latter put him in regular contact with his brother, his uncles Asa and Charles, and other members of the family (mostly sisters) who often visited the Keys.

By 1867, however, Orville found more lucrative employment with Allen, Poole & Co., cattlemen, shippers, and butchers of Galveston. Business was so good that he paid off the financial obligations he had assumed in Mystic. In search of additional funds to invest in the South, he asked his father in May 1869 to sell his shares in Northern shipping, "as I want to raise all the money I can for the Cattle business. ...Do you think you could hire $5000 for me? I can give Allen Poole & Co. for security. I want to put it in the Cattle business, and money is too high out here, 12 per ct. is the least you can get it for. Please see Mr. Mallory or some moneyed man and see what you can do." Like his father and brother Henry, he was borrowing money to invest in ventures he hoped would be profitable. In July he reported that one of his bosses had offered him a one-third share ($2,500) in a real estate trade he had made. Orville believed he could "manage it easily," that business prospects were "so much better" in Texas than in the North and that "one dollar invested here this summer will be equal to two dollars next year."[25] When he heard that the Maine whale oil (fishworks) industry, in which Amos and his sons had invested heavily, might at last be earning interest, he was "much pleased" and hoped that "the tide has at last turned in our favor." Still, with whatever interest he might accrue, he asked his father to pay off his debts, send him the remainder, and sell his fishworks shares as soon as the price was right. "I want all money here that I can raise." For Orville and Henry (who was investing in cotton), the flow of their money from North to South indicated their changing regional identity.[26]

Meanwhile Orville was having a "very fine time" and learning "a great deal about the Cattle business." He reported that during a three-day period in May 1869, his firm had shipped 600 head and was about to ship 200 more.

> I am in the saddle most of the time and have got so that I can stand a long ride without getting lame and sore. They think nothing here after riding about all day to take a little ride of twenty miles towards sun down and bring

> in the Cattle. Last evening we brought in our 200 Head and when we had them within fifty feet of the shipping pen they became frightened and stampeded which caper they cut up three times and to a person who has never seen a stampede it is a sight worth seeing. When they start nothing can stop them. They will run over Horse rider and every thing in their way and can only be stopped after a long chase and they are somewhat over their fright. The noise they make would compare very well with a pretty good sized earthquake.

On 11 September Orville was "in the saddle nearly all day with the thermometer at 90 degrees. I stand it first rate though," he assured his parents. Excitement of a different kind is what Orville experienced when he was tapped to transport cash to pay for cattle his bosses purchased. Once he carried $12,000 currency and $5,000 in gold from Galveston to the company base at Indianola. On another occasion he transported $8,000 by coach from Galveston to San Antonio. "Texas is not a very desirable country to travel in under those circumstances," he told Amos, but having crossed the Brazos, Colorado, and Guadalupe Rivers, he was "getting to be something of a traveler." As for the family's greatest concern about living in the South, Orville reported "no indication of fever."[27]

Over the next several years he assumed greater financial obligations, all with confidence and an almost puritanical devotion to delayed gratification. "I am very much in need of money and can use all I can get hold of at good advantage and run no risk." By mid-September 1869 his firm was running a beef factory (slaughterhouse) and had killed about 1,000 head of cattle (beeves). Hides and tallow were important byproducts. "It makes me some extra work," Orville reported. One day he shipped 25,000 pounds of tallow. So great was his commitment that within two years he was offered a junior partnership in the firm, dated retroactive to July 1868. "My interest is one fifth," he told his parents. Although Orville was "several thousand dollars in debt," he was confident that "in a year or two I will own my interest free from debt. You see it will be necessary for me to study economy for a while." His company was now launching a new product of "putting beef into cans." Orville believed there was "a great deal of money in it," but it would entail "an extra expense of $12000 or 13000, which will you see increase my indebtedness still more." So great were expectations for canned

beef that his company was investing $40,000 in another firm, New York and Texas Beef Preserving Co., and sending it "all the beef they can use." By August 1871 Allen, Poole was "putting up six Beeves per day," which he predicted would reach fifteen within a month and fifty by year's end. Orville admittedly was heavily in debt, but he had high hopes and assurances that his investments would flourish. It was a different predicament from that of Amos, whose Northern enterprises were not providing him the income needed to meet his credit obligations under the "open account" system that his family had always used. Even the family home in Mystic, assessed at $4,063 in 1871, was well below the local average of $7,148. Thus the Tifts, though solid citizens, lacked the social standing of such families as the Clifts, Fishes, Packers, or Burrowses. Yet Orville seemed pleased that his father decided to pay what he could rather than surrender "everything to your creditors." It was no small measure of filial duty that Orville, though strapped for funds himself, sent regular contributions of $50 to keep the Mystic Tifts afloat.[28]

Such sacrifices were even more remarkable in light of responsibilities Orville assumed in 1870 for a wife and family. His bride had Mystic connections. Eliza Katherine Mallory was the daughter of David and Sarah Mallory, whose family owned the shipping line on which Orville once worked. He seemed relieved that his father approved. "At times I get a little weak in the knees when I think of the responsibility...but upon second thought they strengthen as I know I have gained the 'capital prize' in life's lottery." Lest Amos be concerned about the suitability of Galveston for a family home, Orville assured him that it "continues extremely healthy with no indications of fever." The Tift/Mallory union at the Congregational church in October was a grand affair. "The galleries were thrown open for public use, and every inch of standing room was appropriated," reported the *Mystic Journal.* The bride was "beautiful beyond description," the reception tables were "miracles of beauty," and the wedding gifts included "very valuable household articles of gold and silver," precious jewelry, and a "bundle of greenbacks."[29] After a honeymoon in New York, the couple leased a dwelling in Galveston. Orville reported to his mother that they were

> very pleasantly fixed and are both the happiest mortals you ever saw. ...Eliza is everything that is good (far too good for me) and I never look at her without thinking that I am the luckiest man living. She is looking much

> better than when she left Mystic, and if outward appearances go to show anything she is perfectly contented and happy. To speak figuratively she is a "*Trump*" and I am *very very* fond of her. The House we live in is almost precisely the same model of ours at home and we have the two rooms on the west side of the hall.

Although Orville was "almost broke," his future in business looked bright, and he promised to send more money to his parents soon.[30]

Throughout the early 1870s Orville's cattle enterprises continued to thrive and future prospects looked even better. By August 1875 his firm was shipping "about two thousand head of cattle a month to Havana, a great many to New Orleans, and are running our Canned Beef Factory to its full capacity." It also received a government contract for 250,000 pounds of canned beef.[31] But flush times for Orville soon came to an end. A month later a hurricane and massive tidal surge devastated Galveston and Indianola. The Signal Service labeled it the most severe storm to hit the United States mainland since that office began reporting. At Galveston the tides were thirteen feet above normal, and at Indianola, where much of Orville's business centered, about three-quarters of the town was swept away and 176 people were killed. Hundreds of cattle were swept into the gulf, thus leading to the demise of Allen, Poole & Co.[32]

This misfortune coincided with other tragedies for the family during the 1870s. In January 1873 Orville's cousin, Charles Noyes, was attacked by three men near his boarding house in New Orleans, which, "after a severe struggle, left him on the ground insensible." He died a week later, according to the local press, of "congestion of the brain." All Tifts, of course, were aware of the hazards of living in tropical Key West and the frontier areas of South Georgia, but little thought was probably given to dangers lurking in the South's largest city. "New Orleans," notes C. Vann Woodward, "easily achieved pre-eminence among unsanitary cities by the filth and squalor of her slums."[33] Then in 1878 came the death of the family matriarch, Hannah Forsythe Tift, at age ninety-two, in Groton, and Charles Tift, at age fifty-eight, in Key West. The latter, who succumbed to edema, was brought to Connecticut for burial. On the death of Hannah, Orville's wife wrote to her sister-in-law Annie that "no one can take a Mother's place" and "comfort can only come from the knowledge that she whom you loved is safe 'in the

Arms of Jesus' and happy in the reunion of those who have gone before—Blessed Thought!"[34]

In the midst of these tragedies, however, hope for the family's future emerged from the business success of Orville's older brother Henry, with whom he soon sought refuge. Returning to Mystic was hardly an option at this point for any of the Southern Tifts inasmuch as opportunities were so much greater in their own region. In 1870 Henry left the shipping trade to become general manager for the manufacturing enterprises of Nelson and Asa in Albany. Here he was responsible for overseeing Nelson's saw mill, which was located on the river, and able to witness the problems associated with acquiring timber by water, especially during floods. Despite the risks and given the family's entrepreneurial spirit, it is not surprising that Henry should think about starting his own mill. Henry also ran Nelson's machine shop, and so scarce were skilled workmen that he often asked his father for help from Connecticut. "We expect to get considerable Gin repairing," he observed as cotton was being planted in 1871, "and would like to get some one who understands that sort of work" to "take charge of the shop, as if we continue Sawing I shall be at the Mill most of the time."[35] Henry was looking for workers with Yankee talent and reliability, qualities he did not discern among the local population.

Still, Henry found much to like about South Georgia. "The peach trees are in bloom, the grass is springing up, and every thing begins to look quite Springlike," he told his sister in February 1871.

> The river has been very high and for more than a week we could only get to the Saw Mill by boat. We were very fortunate in getting off with very little loss. The river is now falling fast. I think if I stay in Georgia another winter I shall have to bring you out...as I think you would enjoy it as well as myself. Albany has been quite lovely this winter with parties, dances &c, but owing to Lent it is now rather dull. I go into society very little except at Uncle Nelsons and Annie Rawsons and on the whole find it rather dull. I should judge from all reports that Orville is very happy in his married life and sometimes I almost wish I was in the same fix.[36]

Obviously Henry's life remained unfulfilled, and in early 1872 he made his move when several opportunities appeared. First, and most importantly, the Brunswick and Western Railroad was about to complete an extension from Tebe (now Waycross) all the way to Albany. Along this line, in north

Berrien County was 4,900 acres of timberland once owned by speculator Arthur Brisbane and secured by Nelson and Asa before the Civil War. In March 1872 Henry selected a site for his own sawmill along the tracks of the B & W where two well trodden trails converged. It was also the highest point in Georgia south of the fall line in Macon, 365 feet above sea level and 177 feet higher than Albany. Unlike his uncle's settlement a generation earlier, the railroad rather than the river would provide the artery for Henry to do business with the outside world. For a consideration of $10,000, he obtained the land in July and called his settlement Pine Summit.[37]

Henry's lands were situated in the middle of Georgia's longleaf pine belt, where the topography varied from flat to moderately hilly. Since its settlement in the early 1820s, it was populated largely by white farmers, termed "Jeffersonian yeomen" by Ann Malone, who might own up to 490 acres and whose aggregate wealth ranged from $151 to $700. They were "remarkably self-sufficient, overwhelmingly landed, and more free of genuine poverty than most of Georgia" in the postbellum era. Their crops suited their needs, consisting of corn, oats, sweet potatoes, rice, and sugar cane, but very little cotton, and stocks of cattle, sheep, and hogs. Though situated between two Black Belt plantation societies, slavery was not extensive in the region, and only a small percentage of the population was black.[38] Cracker culture stereotypes described by Mark Wetherington for the wiregrass counties to the northeast are no less applicable to the locale of Henry's settlement. It was a society visitors considered to be

> almost destitute of a work ethic. Its people, so the story went, were reduced by a hostile environment of sandy barrens and unrelenting heat to a race of "lank, lazy men" who refused to work because it "would reduce them to an equality with the abhorred negroes." To outsiders, and especially northerners, the result of this indolent lifestyle, seemingly devoid of such storied Yankee traits as hard work and ambition, was squalor and degradation beyond comprehension.

Wetherington rejects the view that these plain folk were inherently lazy or lacked ambition, or that they held antimarket attitudes. By sharing a sense of "communalism" with their social superiors (and inferiors), they became "increasingly involved in a market economy." While the wealthier and better educated planters became political leaders, they were expected to safeguard the interests of country folk in exchange for their deference. "It

was a form of 'consensual governance' in which the elite held power with the consent of plain folk, who believed that planters understood their needs and protected their interests."[39] Thus Henry entered an area where paternalism was already in place.

The first house on Henry's land was the 14' x 16' shack in which he had been living in Albany, transported by railroad flat car. According to his son Tommy, it was built of pine slabs and had a red clay chimney held together with wood strips. Drinking water came from rain running off the tin roof into a barrel. "Kerosene lamps or wood fires provided light and heat." Communication was by telegraph at the railroad station and letters, and transportation was by horse and buggy or wagon. "There was no fire protection, only bucket brigades."[40] For machinery Henry bought the remains of a sawmill that had burned down in the village of Willingham, near Albany, from T. H. Willingham, a wealthy landowner and his future father-in-law. A black laborer, Louis Walker, hauled it through the piney woods with eight oxen. On 5 August Henry told his father that his cousin, Nelson Franklin Tift, and his family would soon be joining him.

> We are gradually getting every thing here in good working order but have considerable work to do yet. Nelson is now in town and expects to move his family down here next Wednesday. It will be very pleasant for me to have them here, and I hope I shall get a little more civilized after they get here. I suppose some of Uncle Nelson's family will visit Nelson's Wife occasionally which will make it very pleasant for me. I feel as though I was getting to be a perfect Hoosier since I came here, as we see no one but the Mill hands, and a few people living about the country, and they are about as little account as any people I ever saw. We are working pretty hard and have a good prospect for making money. I think if we have ordinary good luck we can clear $1000 per month and perhaps do better.

Nelson Franklin stayed for a couple years, but the timber trade seemed not to be his calling, and Henry expressed hope that he would find other employment.[41]

His younger brother Edmund, however, was a better fit. Edmund thought he had made a solid career choice when he took a position in spring 1873 for ten dollars a week in the fancy goods section of Lord and Taylor

Department Store in New York City. But the Panic in September prompted his resignation and, with nothing better in the offing, decided to help his brother in South Georgia. He arrived in October to "find things here very much as I expected," he told his parents, "but like the place better than I thought I would." He found lodgings with Nelson Franklin and his wife Susan and took his meals with Henry. He felt fortunate to live in Nelson's home "for it is the only place around here where they live as decent folks should. Still we hope to have a mansion of our own before long and will then try and live in better style." Admittedly he did not want to spend many years in such a place, but "this kind of work agrees with me very well for I have been feeling better since I have been here." The climate especially was "delightful." Henry also seemed well, but he worked so much that Edmund feared he would wear himself out. "He works from early in the morning until sundown and does not seem to think of any thing else but his business," he told one of his sisters.[42] By now the settlement had a post office and two stores and was officially called Tifton.[43]

Henry's persistence and Edmund's help ultimately brought success, even in the wake of the Panic. Edmund reported in December that they were "very busy" at the mill and were trying desperately to fill orders totaling 200,000 feet of lumber. "Henry went to Albany Monday and got a number of hands and it now begins to look like business around the mill." From the cleared timberland, Henry was planning to create a plantation for cotton and other crops. Already by January 1875 twelve or fifteen acres were set aside. Henry also planned a turpentine operation, to keep his employees busy when orders for lumber slackened, and a gin house since there was so much cotton grown in the area and no place to process it. He had even decided to build a better house for himself, but the needs of business always came first. Edmund seemed to enjoy being part of Tifton's development and did not seek opportunities to escape to Albany. "I could make myself as well contented here as I could there," he believed. In fact, he was so busy that it was "quite difficult for me to get away," he told his mother.

> I get up about half past six...when the second whistle blows and get through my days work about 8 o'clock in the evening as I have to make out my lumber a/c every night. I also take charge of the Commissary and that takes about all of my spare time up so I am kept on the go about all the time, which suits me well as I do not have a chance to get lonesome.[44]

But he also endured his share of problems. With Henry in Mystic and Nelson in Albany for the Christmas holidays of 1873, Edmund had to manage the plant himself on 26 December. "I wish I could give you a favorable report but I cannot," he wrote Henry.

> I got a number of the hands out this morning and got things to working nicely. Williams sawed one log and then went down to the store and came back just too drunk for anything. He came to me and said he could not work until after dinner but he has not made his appearance. I have got the hands working in the yard as there are only six of them and have got two of the cutters in the woods.
>
> I tried this morning to work the edging saw but it is not fixed right and will not work. I cannot get it fixed for Romney is too drunk for anything. Williams was sober about all day yesterday and instead of having his drunk then he is having it now.

Further awareness of how different the wilds of South Georgia were from the comforts and conveniences of New York came in March 1874 when Edmund got a toothache. The only available dentist was on a train passing through, "so the conductor detained the train for me to come down and have my tooth out. I had about fifteen or twenty standing around to witness the operation and they all gave me credit for having a great deal of nerve as the tooth came out mighty hard and I did not even flinch."[45] Such untoward experiences, however, did not prevent Edmund from feeling an integral part of his brother's venture. He believed Henry's decision to buy Nelson Franklin's mill interest in March 1874 the "best thing" and vowed to Amos to "do all in my power to help him out." He was "perfectly contented to remain here with him all the time if he makes me a good inducement." Edmund remarked to Orville that a show was coming to town "next Saturday night, so you can imagine what an important place Tifton is getting to be."[46]

In order to ensure a steady market for his timber, Henry made frequent trips to Savannah and Brunswick to secure orders. In April 1874 he waited impatiently for a Captain Denison to arrive from New London to pick up some lumber to haul back to Connecticut. "If this cargo turns out well, I can probably get considerable business from Mystic," he told Amos.With the addition of "two extra Boilers and a new carriage," he expected to "have the Mill in pretty good shape." Equally important to his endeavors was a steady

labor supply, and by 1875 Henry was making trips to Albany for more workers. "We are now very busy," Edmund told his mother in February, "having all we can attend to...for the next five or six weeks." By this time other improvements were in place. Henry had persuaded the railroad to lay a sidetrack at his mill to facilitate the loading of lumber, and there were several more buildings, including a watchman's house, office, commissary, and stable for livestock, mostly mules.[47] What seems remarkable about Henry's success is that it was sustained in the wake of the Panic of 1873 as the national economy plunged into a deep depression and the Southern timber boom of the 1860s ended.[48] Several factors sustained his enterprise as timber prices slumped and other operators went out of business. Owing to financial support from his uncles, Henry was not reliant on Northern investors when capital dried up; he had his own milling operation managed in part by his brothers; he utilized the more efficient railroad network rather than rely on river rafting; he had fresh stands of timber that were accessible to the railroad; and finally, in contrast to the lackadaisical attitude of his father, Henry was totally dedicated to his business. His frontier challenge was unique but no less severe than those of earlier generations of Tifts.

Despite Tifton's remoteness, Henry maintained continuous communications with family in New England, Albany, and Key West. In 1873 he asked his father to send him a Mystic boilermaker named Eldridge to install his new boilers and even asked his Uncle Nelson to send Amos $50. One of the first women to arrive in Tifton was Eliza Mallory Tift, who accompanied her husband when his business in Texas washed away. Their daughter describes how this wealthy refined young female, educated at the Packer Institute in New York City, survived in "this vast untamed land."

> Of course not all of South Georgia was like this, but from the Okefenokee Swamp to the Flint River, this vast stretch was virgin timber land, no regal plantation houses graced the country side, only here and there a rude frame home with wooden shutters and a daubed clay chimney. Except for the beauty of the tall cathedral-like pines, and the color in Spring of wild jasmine and honeysuckle there was nothing.

> I am sure I would have been very lonely, but she was made of sterner stuff. Uncle Henry had had a simple cottage built for her, just across from the mill. It had no conveniences, of course, Kerosene lamps, a wood stove, open fireplaces for heat and a Chick Sales in the backyard.
>
> I have heard her say, that unless she had company, six months would pass, and she wouldn't see a soul except Father, Uncle Henry and Mr. Hall, the manager of the mill. There were negros, of course, and faithful Mammy Jane who was such a wonderful cook and so devoted.[49]

In fall 1875 Orville's Aunt Irene, who had moved to Albany with her husband, Walter Mann, came to Tifton for an extended visit and "they were having fine times." Uncle Charles Tift spent several days with Henry before returning to Key West, and Uncle Nelson and Aunt [Annie] Maria also paid the Tifton Tifts a visit, "so as you see we have had considerable company," Henry told his mother.[50]

With such a concentration of kin in South Georgia, Amos decided to see for himself the attractions of the region in November 1875. On the 25th he informed his daughters in Mystic of the cramped conditions in his family's Tifton abode. "I room the present with Henry. We slept together last night without interfering in the least with each others nights." It must have been a relief to return to civilization several days later when he visited Nelson. The Albanian Tifts were thriving and seemed happy to see Amos. "Sunday dinner is the signal for the family gathering," he told Phebe, "and it is expected that all will be present. The Sons in Law are fine looking young men, and with their companions appear to be perfectly happy." While in Albany, in contrast to Tifton, he stayed in comfort with Asa, whose home had "all the conveniences I could desire." With envy and awe he described the serenity of these Southern surroundings to his daughter Annie. Uncle Asa had a garden "with a great many beautiful roses and other flowers in bloom. I had a very pleasant room in his house and every morning and evening he gave me a ride in his Buggy. Your Uncle Nelson has seven children and eight grand children and all living around and with him."[51] His brothers had succeeded in carving a new civilization and family out of the wilderness.

But Amos could not outstay his welcome and had to return to Tifton where Henry and Edmund were working from dawn to dusk to create another family outpost. Part of Amos's mission was to help his sons build a store. To this end he assisted a carpenter Henry hired from Albany. The store would cost $400 and be the only two-story building in the county.

Seemingly forgetful of his own pioneering days in Key West, he found little to like about Henry's spartan existence in Tifton, as he described it to Annie.

> I am writing this letter in Henry's cabin. It is like most of the *Shanties* here, about 18 feet long and 15 feet wide, all in one room, the chimney built of clay outside the building. The Country all around is level or nearly so and covered with tall pine trees, some of them nearly if not quite 100 feet high. The people—black and white—are very ignorant. I think that not one in ten is able to read or write. I do not *admire* the country and therefore would not like to live here a great while. Henry & Edde have as much as they can do. ...Edde has taken pains to collect a good many pictures (on the walls) of different kinds cut from papers &c and he has a good many family pictures. I wish I had yours to look at with the rest.

For Amos the most important part of the new store would be the upper floor devoted to sleeping. "I know that Henry really needs improved quarters," he told Phebe. Most impressive, and a source of entertainment for his grandchildren in Mystic, was Amos's description of Henry's sawmill. A typical morning would find

> Edde inspecting lumber as fast as the saw turns it out, the different descriptions classified and assigned to their proper places on the "skids"—ready to be shoed in to the cars whenever the time for shipment arrives. Henry with his flannel shirt old pants and old hat sprinkled with saw dust attending to particulars and to every thing in general and Amos—well I'll stop, for it is not always wise to speak boastfully of one's self.
>
> The whistle gives a shrill protracted shriek at day break as a signal to "wake up," in a few minutes another blast, but not as long, and after a short interval, two short abrupt puffs, when it is expected that every man will be at his post. Now we hear the sharp snap of the teamster's whips, the puffing of steam, the buzzing of the saw as it causes its way through pine logs—probably—one hundred years (and more) old, and almost as fast as a man (a lazy one) would walk.

Always of interest to Amos were the religious customs of any locality he visited. But it was the physical circumstances and the condition of the plain folk of South Georgia, rather than the liturgy, that fascinated him in a letter to his mother in mid-December.

> There is a Log church three miles from here which I visited last Sunday. ...We rode out on Mule back but happened to take the wrong path which lengthened our ride out to at least five miles. We however arrived in due time at the church situated in the midst of the Piney Woods—and no house that we saw within two miles of the building. ...It was built of logs, some of them three or four inches apart. So you see we did not lack for ventilation—in fact I had too much of it for I was uncomfortably chilly. There were two doors and one window or rather opening for a window there being no shutter or sash. The congregation was composed of about twenty persons—men, women and children. O could you but see the fashions. Calico dress and sun bonnets, cape hanging down from the shoulders prevail.

On the following Sunday he reported to Phebe that he was

> disappointed in there being no preaching, it being thought best by the licensed preacher that as so much time had been taken up in the S. School...there be no preaching or other exercises. It was not until after this announcement that I asked the privilege of saying a few words which they readily granted, and they really appeared interested in what I had to say. I presume that being a stranger to most of them and my being dressed in "*store clothes*" had something to do with it. I do wish you could have heard the singing of three or four pieces before the exercises of the school commenced. A young man with bob tail coat, buttons almost up to the small of the back, shirt largely exposed in front, looked as if it had not been washed for a week, no neck tie on and with a nasal voice, beating any thing but time with his hands and some of the female voices so sharp and shrill. But I must not criticize so severely for they as well as most of the congregation doubtless considered the music very good.

Finally he shared with young Annie his fascination with the black folks he encountered.

> The Negroes had a grand time New Year's night, singing and dancing, keeping up till near morning. Although they live mainly on Bacon and Meal, yet they appear to be the happiest class of persons here. Christmas however is the great day with them. I think there must have been as many as a thousand men and women in Broad Street in Albany, the business street of the place. I did not see a drunken person among them but they all appeared as happy and as full of fun as they could hold. Of course they have but little money but with few exceptions they spend all they have.

These encounters with real Southerners and their culture caused Amos to reflect on this region's differences from his homeland. "The key to the many strange peculiarities of the people in this section of country is ignorance," he concluded.[52] Such prejudicial statements were not untypical of opinions held by New Englanders about the South.

Amos's brief visit to Georgia was bittersweet. He seemed pleased by the close family relationships, his brothers' prosperity in Albany, and that his sons in Tifton were busy creating a new life. But there was "little to do in the way of work" to help the latter, and at this point he was only a financial liability. Perhaps as consolation, he expressed hope to his mother that "my presence here acted as a stimulant by way of encouragement to them." How much stimulation he provided seems doubtful since the highlight of his trip consisted of his brief visits to Albany, which he regarded as "quite a relief from the monotony of Tifton." This sentiment is equally evident in a sarcastic remark to Phebe as he was about to return to Mystic. "The boys...feel sorry that I am to leave so soon, and I don't blame them for they cannot afford to part with any one who can contribute to the social element of the place."[53] However profitable, promising, and remunerative Tifton might have been, it was too unrefined and unpredictable for Amos, who preferred the starchy environs of his native New England.

It is somewhat surprising therefore that Amos, at age seventy-three, should return to the South just six years later with Phebe in tow. Early health concerns may have been dispelled by a desire to visit her sons, now including Orville, in Tifton, but a major attraction in 1881 was the International Cotton Exposition in Atlanta. Orville and Edmund met them there in December, and after two days Amos told Annie, "to say we enjoyed it would faintly express the *pleasure* it gave us." A highlight was their meeting with Charles Tift, Jr., who had already spent ten days there. But most of their time was spent in Albany, where Phebe was "in excellent health and as happy and contented in her (our) pleasant surroundings as you could imagine." Even the more rustic surroundings of Tifton held a certain charm for the elderly couple. "I wish you all could enjoy such a morning as this," he observed on 30 March 1882, "but as it cannot be—just imagine the finest N. England day in July and you have it in all its freshness and beauty." Added pleasure came from a visit of the Albany Tifts, "a fine dinner and strawberries to top off with."[54] Although Amos remained true to his Connecticut roots, he was able to cherish pleasant memories of the South until his death two years later. "I

don't think there has ever been a death in Mystic that touched almost every heart as his did," Amos's daughter Caroline observed to her brother Edmund in Tifton. "Uncle Nelson cried like a child."[55] However modest Amos's material possessions may have been, his obituary recognized his spiritual stewardship. "He has made a record such as few men have. Everywhere it speaks of truth, virtue, Christianity." Another notice called his life "blameless" and "self-sacrificing almost to an extreme."[56] Phebe eventually passed away in 1901.

While Henry's pioneering efforts in Tifton were rapidly progressing, his uncle in Albany was hardly standing still. Jettisoned from the national stage in the early 1870s, Nelson was less active in defending Southern rights and more involved in fostering his city's economic growth. First and foremost, Nelson remained a businessman, and unlike some others in the family, he was fortunate to escape serious illness, natural disaster, and ill effects from the Panic of 1873. That he suffered less from the shockwaves of the latter owes much to the slow resurgence of the crop that had contributed so much to the ruination of the Southern economy and way of life a decade earlier. As Mark Wetherington notes, farmers in nearby Hawkinsville were receiving almost twice as much per pound in 1872 as in the 1850s, allowing some planters to accumulate fortunes. "Indeed, prices were so high that one had to look back to the flush times of the mid-1830s to find comparable quotations. Even as figures declined during the depressed 1870s...farmers continued to plant, reaching pre-war levels of production by 1880." Nelson and his partner Asa were ideally situated as cotton brokers to take advantage of this steady regional upswing, which soon became a boom.[57] The brothers offered "unsurpassed facilities" to local planters. "WE MAKE THE SALE OF COTTON A SPECIALTY!" was their pitch. "Should Planters and Buyers desire to ship to Savannah, Baltimore, New York, Boston or Liverpool, we can assure them that the highest prices, with the least cost, will be obtained." And in partnership with Henry, Nelson owned a machine shop, the city saw mill, and a wood shop that offered "First Class Work at Low Prices!" According to Wetherington's estimate, of the groups that formed the New South town elite—lawyers, physicians, teachers, etc.—"merchants were by far the most influential," accounting for 38% of elected local officials.[58]

But Nelson's business interests were never parochial. With dogged persistence he worked for decades to link his city and region to larger trade opportunities. Central to his vision was the railroad. When his grand plan for

a Southern transcontinental line to San Diego was pre-empted by completion of a more northerly route in 1869, he fostered a "Direct Trade Movement" to funnel the rich resources of America's heartland through Savannah to Liverpool. If the railroads from Atlanta, Montgomery, Nashville, Memphis, Louisville, Cincinnati, and St. Louis could agree to prorate their freight charges with each other and with steamships, he reasoned, they could provide an "airline" to bridge the ocean. By linking Liverpool with the American West, Savannah would seize much of the trade going through New York and New Orleans, and Albany would find more accessible markets for its cotton. Nelson's ideas received an enthusiastic reception in Savannah, Augusta, and Atlanta, and they were welcomed by civic leaders in the Midwest. At a direct trade convention in Atlanta in May 1874, he argued that all cities south and west "are nearer to Savannah than New York. Climate and other circumstances favor the Southern route. The merchants and producers of the West and South would unite heartily in promoting this enterprise of mutual benefits to the country." Nelson believed he could have his "Liverpool, Savannah, and Great Western Line" operational by October. First, however, he had to enlist the cooperation of Liverpool shipping interests, and they proved none too pliable. In talks with Rathbone Brothers & Co., "they thought it doubtful whether the guarantees of trade and prices furnished by the agreement would be sufficient to induce steamship owners to try a new line." Managing directors of the Mississippi and Dominion Steamship Line were no more encouraging. "Capt Flinn is a plain outspoken sensible and clever man," observed Nelson. "As soon as I had stated my business and position—He said I would not be able to get ships without a guarantee—they had no ships to spare—were doing well with what they had—most of them were too deep draft." Flinn urged him to build his own ships for the run.[59] Nevertheless Nelson was able to make Albany a railroad hub for Southwest Georgia. In the early 1870s two more lines offered service to a station on city property donated by him, and newspapers carried extensive timetables for South-Western, Atlantic & Gulf, and Brunswick & Albany passenger connections, some even with sleepers.[60]

In his later years Nelson became, more than ever, a father figure and further endeared himself to citizens of his community. It seemed only natural that his business enterprises should cater to the interests of local farmers. "A

friendly face behind the counter was only one of the advantages that interior merchants enjoyed," observes Wetherington. "They soundly beat coastal factors at advertising," their ads in local papers being "large affairs, often covering a quarter of a page, and occasionally half" and showing much imagination. Calling itself the "Planters Headquarters," the Tift brothers' store offered "Everything a Farmer Needs," ranging from "a needle to a steam engine," and even guano at the lowest prices in the market. The Tifts were also believed to have the best facilities for shipping cotton in the state, having shipped 430 bales from a single warehouse one day in 1886. Some idea of the problems they encountered is evident in the following dialogue between a "prominent warehouseman" and a delinquent customer.

> *Delinquent Customer*—Mr.-----"I want for buy sum few things, and I haint got enough money to pay for 'em, and I want you to charge 'em up."
> *Prominent Warehouseman*—"But you know you haven't paid up all of your last year's account yet."
> *D.C.*—"Y-a-a-s. But you can jest charge interest on that and it'll be all right. I be darned of I've got but two dollars to my name."
> *P.W.*—"Can't do it. Don't wish to open any new accounts yet."
> *D.C.*—"Well, that's all right; I don't want you to open any new account with me; you already got one open, jest put it on that."
> Argument was exhausted and the P.W. caved in.[61]

Whether Nelson was the "Prominent Warehouseman" is uncertain, but it was the kind of concern he displayed for fellow farmers.

Another side of his character, revealed by journalist H. T. McIntosh, concerns an encounter with an "irate customer" who employed some "ugly language" in lodging a complaint about his bill. With his "rare smile," Nelson said he was sorry, but

> the more the Colonel smiled the more abusive did the customer become. Presently the statement was ready. The visitor paid it, the Colonel receipted it and handed the money to the bookkeeper. "That seems to wind up our business," said the smiling head of the firm, "and now—!"
>
> With that he waded into the abusive customer with flying fists, and sent him on his way with a black eye and a bloody nose. And when he wiped his hands on his handkerchief he was still smiling. He did not lose his temper, but a boorish customer needed to be taught a lesson in business courtesy.

Virtually no modern business could survive such customer relations protocol, but none could gainsay Nelson's physical or moral courage. He was "strictly business," observed McIntosh, and in 1883 he advised Albanians to abandon the "old beaten and unprofitable tracks" of the past and engage in such pursuits as "fruit culture, and stock, cattle and fowl raising." He also opposed tariffs that were not necessary to support the government and which might "benefit one class of citizens or industries at the cost of others."[62] Finally, ever the innovator, Nelson spearheaded efforts to make Albany the "Artesian City," a "Saratoga of the South." He not only served on a committee to verify water purity, but "harnessed an artesian well" on his own property "and made of it a hewer of wood and a drawer of water," according to a city handbook. Tift's well could draw, "by its own force," 105 gallons of water per minute from a depth of 630 feet to a height of seventy-five feet, supply the family's water needs, and drive a forage and oat cutter that he rigged up from an old gin.[63] It was a marvel of Yankee ingenuity.

By this time, coincident with Henry Grady's creed, Yankees were increasingly welcome in the New South, and the Artesian City put on its best face to attract them. "We should be glad to have a few settlements of hardy immigrants from the North in Dougherty and in every other county" was the view of the *News and Advertiser*. "The tide of immigration is flowing to the South. Money and people are coming to our sunny homes from the icy North and distant shores. Will we take the tide at floodgate and roll on to fortune?" Suspicions, however, still lingered about how outsiders would relate to blacks and whether the social barriers constructed in the antebellum South and redeemed in the 1870s would be respected. A newspaper report of an incident in nearby Quitman illustrated the problems that could arise when the color bar was violated. They arose when a Connecticut missionary society opened a black college in an old hotel with

> a male teacher and several female assistants, all imported from the North. These Yankee school marms at once made themselves very obnoxious to the respectable white people of the community, not only by their teachings but by their example. They adopted habits of social equality with the negroes, and promenaded the streets with them, the bad effects of which soon spread among the negroes of the community and gave rise to a state of bad feeling generally between the two races. The destruction of the college building by fire is, no doubt, the work of incendiaries, but we are not surprised at it.[64]

Nelson, by way of contrast, always did his utmost to ingratiate himself with his Southern hosts. It is significant that one of the final projects to which he devoted much time and energy was the Confederate Veterans Home (of which he was a trustee) and care of Confederate widows and orphans.

When Nelson Tift died in November 1891, his city lapsed into deep mourning. "GLOOM!" headed columns of newspaper tributes bordered in black. Some expressions, "the child cries unto its father but no response is heard" or "we are like a ship without a rudder," were steeped in bathos. But the magnitude of Albanians' grief was evident in the estimated 10,000 who attended his funeral and a procession that extended half a mile. Perhaps the recognition of Nelson as "not only father of Albany but father and projector of every railroad that now enters these portals" was the sincerest tribute. "He wanted to be within touch and reach of the world. He wanted to keep pace with civilization. Instead of a village he wanted a city. ...Every engine that rolls into this city thunders over a pathway born of his genius and consummated by his energy." Although "very wealthy" and estimated to be worth over $500,000, he was praised for his beneficence. "Charity was his watchword. ...No man in Albany dispensed more charity than he," and always in "a quiet, unostentatious manner."[65] Although Nelson's latest biographer credits him chiefly for transforming his adopted home into "the heart of Georgia's Cotton Kingdom," his most lasting contribution was the city of Albany, which, without the firm foundations laid by its founder, could hardly have grown into Southwest Georgia's major metropolitan area.[66]

5

Boom Times in South Georgia

> If somebody came to South Georgia and didn't think it was the greatest place on earth, I'd have that son of a bitch sent to the mental ward at the state hospital and put under shotgun guard.[1] —Sonny Sammons

In the nineteenth century the entrepreneurial spirit of the second and third generations of Tifts converged on Key West, then re-emerged on the inland frontier of South Georgia where, during the fourth and fifth generations, it reached full bloom. Much of this movement may be attributed to fortuitous circumstances. With the deaths of Amos Chapman and Hannah Forsyth, Mystic lost much of its importance, except as a source of family lore, a summer vacation resort, and a burial ground. Even the Tift name was becoming a relative rarity in New England where the cognomen of their Tefft and Tifft cousins enjoyed a more familiar and frequent usage. Likewise, with the deaths of Asa and Charles, Key West was becoming a distant memory. In succeeding generations there were still Tifts living in the islands, but none could trace an ancestral line from Connecticut. Those who remained were likely connected to another family bearing the name from the Bahamas. "Some people down there may have taken the Tift name," a niece of Henry Tift later speculated. But "Uncle Asa was too Aristocratic to have gone astray."[2] Family tradition therefore had to be sustained from the nucleus of interests established in South Georgia. However tenuous connections with this distant outpost of civilization seemed to be, it was becoming a center of agriculture, industry, and trade by the early twentieth century. Not only were Albany and Tifton, through the exertions of Nelson and Henry Harding Tift, booming communities but other family members were expanding to Macon and Atlanta.

Even before the death of Asa in 1889, this concentration of Tift fortunes in South Georgia was well underway. Bereft of family connections in Key West since the death of his brother Charles a decade earlier, Asa spent most

of his time at his Albany home where the general merchandise business he operated with Nelson became, as one account reckoned, "second to none in the State of Georgia." When he died his obituary included the usual platitudes—that he was "a good man" and was surely destined for "the other world," but he hardly exhibited the same sort of piety as his brother Amos. "Sabbath after Sabbath," at Episcopal services in Albany, "quietly, unostentatiously his seat would be taken, always in a rear pew, respectful, devout, attention betokened his manner." But when financial affairs were discussed at congregational meetings, "the man of business led the van, what is the trouble? How much is wanted? ...And the name of A. F. Tift stood at the head of the list of the supporters of this parish."[3] A quiet, lonely, serious man, money for Asa somehow equated with spirituality. Perhaps more than any other member of the family, he exhibited the Protestant ethic in its purest form.

Although he died intestate, Asa's generosity extended to his family and friends. After a lengthy settlement of the estate, the Tift complex on the waterfront, consisting of two wharves, three warehouses, a cigar factory, an ice house, a shed and two houses, was sold to the New York and Texas Steamship Company in 1901; and Asa's dwelling on Whitehead Street, eventually acquired by Ernest Hemingway, was sold at public auction in 1903 for $5,000.[4] Heirs to the Tift estate, totaling $98,366.25, included:

Charles W. & Irene Tift	$14,375.00	Fannie Nelson	$2,053.55
Hannah C. Noyes	$14,375.00	Eves Monsalvatge	$1,449.22
Albert & Fannie Day	$14,375.00	Clarence T. Noyes	$1,026.11
Moser	$14,375.00	James T. Mann	$1,026.11
Lizzie T. Mallory	$9,583.34	William, Clora, & Nelson T. Mitchele	$1,026.11
Katie & Richard Rust	$7,187.50		
George B. Mallory & Lizzie	$7,187.50	Magdalene Valdez & Maria	$898.43
Albert John Loflin & wives	$4,791.67	George Browne Patterson	$598.96
Henry Tift & wife	$4,107.10	Marcedes Curry (Robert)	$449.22
William Tift & wife	$2,053.55	Carrie & William Holmes	$253.55
Edmund Tift & wife	$2,053.55	Clara & Thom Woolfolk	$253.55
Annie and Frank Buckley	$2,053.55		

Among the recipients of this settlement were Asa's two surviving sisters, five nephews, six nieces, and three grandnephews and nieces. Those receiving the largest amounts of $14,375 obviously held a special meaning for him. Charles W. Tift was the son of his brother with whom he had successfully conducted business in Key West. Hannah Noyes had also spent a lot of time with Asa, and her husband Oliver had even assisted with the construction of *The Mississippi*. Fannie Day was the daughter of his sister Frances (Fanny) who had, with her husband, Daniel Pyncheon, been involved in various business enterprises in Key West and South Georgia. Moser escapes identification, but he (or she) was most likely a loyal black aid and caregiver for Asa. Among the other recipients, Fannie Nelson, one of Nelson Tift's daughters, stands out because she lost her husband Thomas in the Civil War.[5] The most common feature of those who received a portion of Asa's estate is that they were in some way related to his life in the South.

But with Asa's death there was no longer a Key West connection, and emphasis now focused on South Georgia, particularly Tifton where Henry Tift was struggling night and day to bring "civilization" to the piney woods. Growth in the 1870s was slow but steady, and Henry spent much time in Albany, at the coast, and even outside Georgia taking orders. His success during these years also depended on the railroad, but the relationship was mutually beneficial. According to Ida Belle Williams, "the lumber and naval stores business had increased so much that in 1879 the number of trains had doubled," and service was available daily except Sundays. Henry even bought a locomotive and constructed a tramway to haul logs from forest to mill. To supplement his lumber trade, he created a turpentine still along this line, and the settlement there was named Harding. Later the tramway, with extensions to Fitzgerald and a village called Mystic, became part of the Atlanta, Birmingham, Coastal Railroad system. In 1880 Georgia, chiefly along a line from Albany to Brunswick, exported an estimated 570,000 gallons of turpentine and 92,000 barrels of resin and pitch. By 1890, with improved transportation facilities, those figures reached 7,251,000 and 841,000 respectively.[6] Most of the owners and operators were migrants from North Carolina where the industry was declining. Robert Outland estimates that "the typical turpentine laborer in Wiregrass Georgia in the 1870s and 1880s was a young, single, illiterate, black man from North Carolina." From 1880 to 1900 the African-American population of Berrien and Irwin Counties (from which Tift was later carved), increased by 710% and 874%

respectively, permanently changing the region's demographics. By 1900 most counties producing naval stores had a ten-fold increase of blacks since 1860. But this prosperous trade also brought in rougher, less-settled workers who were more prone to violence. According to Outland, such "a large number of turpentine laborers had been in trouble with the law" that just the sight of a sheriff or his deputies would cause many to flee to another camp. "Townspeople feared the black workers, considering them wild and unruly, and thought of the white woodsriders [overseers] as outlaws."[7] Unlike those employed in sawmills or in agriculture, turpentine gangs were unattached and alien to the local culture. Henry's brother, Orville, observed that there were few Saturday nights in the early 1880s when a man was not killed in Tifton, and he would never allow his daughter Katherine to leave the house on Saturdays. "Liquor flowed freely, men carried pistols, and a Saturday night killing on Tifton's dusty or muddy streets was nothing unusual," recalls Katherine. The nearest law enforce-ment was twenty-five miles away at Nashville, the Berrien County seat. By 1880 the population of this frontier community was 198, with equal numbers of whites and blacks.[8]

It was likely to instill social control that Henry established at Harding a fig farm, a more settled venture that would be conducive to raising families. He bought six large tracts of land, which he subdivided into forty-two lots. Virtually no figs were produced, but a vineyard operated by Edmund Tift at Mystic was more successful. A more promising method of taming Tifton's wayward element was religion, but Henry, strictly a man of business, had done little to promote it. The religious climate began to change in 1885 when the forty-four-year-old bachelor married Bessie Willingham, a devout Baptist who grew up on a plantation south of Albany where Radium Springs is currently located. He first saw Bess, who was wearing a stylish new hat, at Episcopal services in Albany on an Easter Sunday and allegedly remarked that if she was as good as she was pretty he was going to marry her. They soon met at a house party hosted by Nelson Tift on St. Simons Island. Later Henry proposed while they were out riding. Though upright, Henry was not particularly religious, but going to church with her was part of their nuptial agreement.[9] Entering the rustic environment of Tifton seemed a lesser consideration for Bessie, which she regarded as more of a challenge than a deterrent to her Christian commitment. Methodist Episcopal worshippers held the first services in Tifton, but their shanty was burned by lawless elements in 1884, and a second structure met the same fate in 1887. Henry

then contributed land for a new wooden church, costing $2,000, to accommodate Methodists and Baptists. Three attempts were made to burn it, but guards posted by church members eventually shot and wounded a potential incendiary. When the Methodists built their own church in 1901, Henry bought the old building, moved it to his cotton mill, named it the Bessie Tift Chapel, and opened it to all denominations. By this time law and order prevailed. One of the first actions taken by the city council after Tifton's incorporation in 1890 was the imposition of a $10,000-a-year license for all liquor dealers, which quickly put the saloons out of business and curbed lawlessness.[10]

Alternative entertainment possibilities for Katherine Tift and other Tiftonians centered on the train that ran to Albany one day and returned the next.

> What an event that was. There was no schedule, for they had all day to make the trip of less than two hundred miles. ...But when the whistle let out its long blast, everyone along the line, dropped what they were doing, and hurried to the station. I never missed it when it got to Tifton. Sometimes it stayed as long as half an hour, for there were friends to be greeted, and there was business to be attended to also. The conductor was the shopping agent for the women. He had been to the big cities of Albany and Waycross. They numbered only a few thousand but they were big compared to Alapaha and Ty-Ty and the other settlements along the way. Mrs. Jones wanted two spools of white cotton thread, and for Mrs. Smith he was to get five yards of sheeting, Mrs. Brown wanted "to have a bottle of that Hoyt's German Cologne she's heard so much about." And what had happened since yesterday? ...And so the gossip flowed. A blast from the whistle, a clanging bell, and the train was off the next settlement, where the same thing was gone through again.

Such was the casual nature of train travel in South Georgia in the 1880s that conductors often ordered unscheduled stops for passengers to stretch, eat lunch, and address other personal needs. Katherine also recalls how her mother was introduced to local society.

> It was the custom for the country people to buy calico from the Commissary by the bolt and dress every female member of the family in it from baby to grandma, and the favorite color was red. One day Mother said she looked out of the window and coming up the path were eleven women, all dressed in red-sprigged calico. ...They had come to see the "Furrener" from way up

> yonder. She invited them in, showed them over the cottage, and then set them down to visit over a cup of coffee, which they declined. They had something else to do. Sitting in a semi-circle around the open fire, she saw them take out a little tin can into which they dipped a piece of chewed black gum. What were they doing? She had heard of dipping snuff, but had never seen it done. She sat fascinated, then when one leaned forward to spit she said she held her breath, would she make the fire-place—it was a long way off. She did, and Mother said she leaned back, breathed a sigh of relief, and had great respect for their ability to always hit their mark.

As in most mill towns, it was the buzz of the saw and the whistle that blew in the morning, at noon, and at night that regulated people's lives. Even the animals responded to these sounds as eating times. On Saturdays, according to Katherine, farm folks came to town with their families and wagons full of produce to sell in exchange for manufactured items. While the men attended to business and the children played hopscotch and chewed sugar cane, the women sat on the front porch of Henry's commissary where they nursed their babies, dipped snuff, and gossiped.[11]

The 1880s also featured the construction of two Tifton landmarks—Henry's home on the corner of 2nd Street and Chestnut Avenue in 1887 and the Sadie Hotel on 1st Street in 1889. The former was a result of Henry and Bessie's desire to raise a family. After a honeymoon at Niagara Falls, Saratoga, and Mystic, they settled temporarily in Henry's bachelor quarters, two rooms above his office and commissary. In keeping with trends of the day, their new home utilized a different kind of wood—sycamore, poplar, or curly pine—for each room. Curly pine, an aberrant growth appearing on some large trees, was Henry's favorite, and he stockpiled it at his mill. According to Pat Phillips, a 1990s curator of the restored house, most large homes of that time only had a large parlor in the front for entertaining, the remainder being devoted to bedrooms for the large families. The Tift Home, on the other hand, had a formal parlor, a formal dining room, a butler's pantry, and a kitchen inside the house, instead of disconnected, with all the bedrooms upstairs. Each room also had a distinct personality, with the parlor decorated in light pinks, tans, and browns since it was used in the day, and the dining room decorated in cool, dark shades of burgundy, green, and brown because it was used in the evening. Family photographs from 1903 and 1904 reveal electric lights on the porch. Although Henry was the wealthiest person in town, his home was not ostentatious. It was well made and practical, rather

than ornate, reflecting the man's integrity and his conservative New England roots. Still it was a showpiece for the growing community. It not only attracted sightseers but provided a wholesome environment for the Tifts to raise their burgeoning family. Likewise, the Sadie Hotel, constructed by Captain John Phillips, a Confederate veteran, reflected the town's growth. It was named for his seventeen-year-old daughter who had died of typhoid fever. Although it was commodious, the hotel had only one bathroom, and guests were charged a quarter per bath. The Sadie became an important social center and residence for the many "drummers" frequenting the area.[12]

The most momentous event affecting Tifton's development, however, was the completion of the Georgia Southern and Florida Railway in November 1888, intersecting the Brunswick and Western at Tift's mill. By connecting the settlement with Atlanta and parts north, Tifton became a boom town. An article in the *Berrien County Pioneer* entitled "Booming Tifton" looked with envy on its prospects. "The citizens have taken on a new lease of life...and have waked up to the possibilities of the town becoming a city, and a good sized one at that. ...Every person in the place is imbued with the spirit of progress, and Tifton is bound to grow."[13] Such hyperbole, according to Jerry DeVine, typified the "boomer vocabulary" that permeated descriptions of the new interior towns of South Georgia in this era—"'enterprising' merchants, 'efficient' farmers, 'extensive' mills, and 'prospecting capitalists' paraded through the pages of these weeklies."[14] Nevertheless over the next decade many of Tifton's civic components were put in place, the most important being incorporation in 1890, the election of a mayor, W. H. Love, and a town council of six that included H. H. Tift. In 1891 the city (on a layout resembling Albany) adopted street names and founded its first school, the Tifton Institute, a one-room building, with Henry and Orville on the board of education. Henry recruited its first teacher, William Fish, a family friend from Mystic.The town's first bank, the Bank of Tifton, opened in 1893, followed by completion of an artesian well. A telephone exchange, cigar factory, and opera house opened in 1896. In 1892 the *Albany Herald* estimated Tifton's population at 1,200 and attributed its progress to the fact that "no real estate was sold unless the purchaser agreed to erect a first class building thereon, and no land in the city is sold to negroes."[15] With the creation of a lawn tennis club in 1900, the *Tifton Gazette* assured readers that Tifton was becoming a "cultured municipality. ...This is a game that is never played in the woods."[16]

During the 1890s there were seven major lumber and naval store plants in Tifton that, when running full blast, employed about 700 men, and nineteen turpentine farms with sixty hands each. In 1895 the *Gazette* estimated the city's population at nearly 2,000

> with several of the handsomest residences in the State. It has 10 general merchandise stores, one wholesale grocery, feed and grain house, one of the handsomest hotels in Southern Georgia, several boarding houses, the finest Academy and best disciplined school in this section of the State, a bank chartered and ready for business, with a capital of $50,000; a Machine and Foundry Company with a capital of $20,000, the largest Canning Factory in the State, two colored churches, the white Methodist church and to-day the corner stone of the Baptist church, the finest church in any town of its size in the country. Besides these, are all the minor industries necessary to a prosperous and growing town.[17]

In addition to railroads, this growth was attributed to the entrepreneurial skills of Henry Tift. When the Georgia Lumber Exchange was formed, he became its president and Tifton its headquarters. "Captain Tift will soon complete a large shingle mill and will ship Georgia yellow pine shingles into Connecticut and other eastern states," noted the *Northwest Lumberman*. "Once introduced, they will hold their own against all others." Tift was called "the moving and controlling genius of this region." Henry, long known as the captain from his early days at sea, now earned the moniker "captain of industry."[18]

But he was also gaining fame as a captain of agriculture. Once the timber preserves of Henry's vast acreage were depleted, no attempt was made to replant. Rather he devoted his cleared lands to such products as cotton, corn, livestock, fruit, tobacco, pecans, and sweet potatoes, utilizing the new railroad connections to attract settlers and foster prosperity. Henry promoted this enterprise by establishing a model farm north of town on which he raised a variety of crops and even experimented with oranges. John Burwell Greene, a descendant of the revolutionary war general, superintended Henry's acreage.[19] Henry's brothers were also involved. "It seems only yesterday when this land was a pine forest," his son Tommy later recalled. "Then a grape vineyard where fine varieties such as Niagara, Concord, Bingham, Moore's early, were crushed and made into fine wine by my uncles E. H. & W.O. Tift." Experiments were also carried on in orchards,

nurseries, and row crops. The first tobacco grown in Georgia came from this land. North Carolinians were brought to Tifton to do the curing, using the flue process. Satisfied that tobacco and other items could be grown in Georgia, Henry donated 1,000 acres to the Southern railroad for an experiment station. It was called Cycloneta, after a tornado that had recently swept through the spot.[20] As an ultimate measure of success, Georgia's tobacco acreage increased from 2,025 to 110,000 and its yield from 1,485 to 89,870 pounds from 1910 to 1929, making it one of the nation's leading producers and exceeded only by North Carolina and Kentucky in farm value. General agricultural data for 1889–1890, 1899–1900, and 1909–1910 show that the rolling wire grass region in which Tifton was located surpassed the other six areas of lower Georgia in value of crops per improved acre.[21] A key factor to this growth in Tifton was Henry's ability to attract hardworking settlers with a pioneering spirit, and for this Connecticut Yankee they could best be found in the vast human resources of the North.

In contrast to the growth that was taking place in this Southern outback, a depression, sparked by the Panic of 1893, gripped America's heartlands where industrial expansion had been occurring at a feverish pace during the previous decade. Within six months 8,000 businesses, 400 banks, and 156 railways went out of business. The worldwide economic slump lasted for four years.[22] It was fortuitous that only a week after the nation's gold reserves dropped below the $100,000,000 mark and instigated the Panic, an appeal for "more people" appeared in the *Tifton Gazette*. "The surest and quickest way to develop our state's resources...is to multiply her population, and thereby fill up the waste places." It was "Georgia's Greatest Need." A later editorial argued that this goal could best be realized by attracting outsiders. "There are immense tracts of land in every county of the state susceptible of the highest development and capable of adding untold millions to her wealth, and it would be done if people abroad were made acquainted with them." It was only through the intelligence and energy of "strangers" that Georgia could maximize its potential.[23] The Tifts provided a perfect example of this maxim.

Serving as a further catalyst was the emergence of a Southern immigration movement, spurred in part by the flood of peoples from Europe who were migrating into the Northeast and Upper Midwest in the 1890s.

With branches throughout the region, this society publicized the South's labor needs and the desirability of living in the South.[24] Much of this vacuum, of course, could have been filled by employing the underutilized resource of recently liberated blacks. But an ulterior desire within the movement to rectify their preponderance in so many areas of the South obviated that solution. The promotional literature, though never articulated as such, was pitched to white settlers. Seen in this light, Northern immigration, strongly promoted by Tifton's transplanted Yankee founder, not only did not compromise Southern traditions but reinforced them. Tifton, dubbed by a young Brunswick lawyer as "the queen of all the lovely villages" and situated on the line that connected Atlanta with the Suwannee region of Florida, seemed especially attractive to settlers. In fact, "four Pennsylvania gentlemen with their families" moved to Tifton in December 1893 to raise fruit on a 500-acre plot, and an additional party of forty Ohioans and members of the Ohio Press Association was coming in January. Local promoters rhapsodized about the virtues of their community and how fruit and vegetable growing, rather than cotton, would inaugurate a new age of prosperity on Henry's cleared lands. "When her matchless pine forests are no more, south Georgia will not be a desert waste, but will be one vast garden, hardly less fair than Eden...and Tifton will be the fairest and proudest of the beautiful cities of the bright future."[25] Such were the rosy prospects held out to Northerners who wished to escape the ravages of the depression that was sweeping more developed areas of the country.

All contemporary accounts agree that the character and conduct of the Northern immigrants was beyond reproach and that they seemed willing to tolerate the rude features of a frontier town. As recently as 1892 a Tifton ordinance made it "unlawful for any bull, boar or bitch to run at large upon the streets."[26] So numerous and concentrated were the properties of immigrants from the Keystone State that their settlement was dubbed "Little Pennsylvania." It was situated in Irwin County, where Jefferson Davis had surrendered in 1865, and near a smaller colony called "Little Ohio" in Worth County. As successive waves of Pennsylvanians arrived, they were greeted with paeans of welcome from Tiftonians who were convinced, notwithstanding the recent economic downturn, that they would infuse in Georgia's wiregrass country the same kind of work ethic that had brought so much prosperity to industrial cities of the North.[27] "They are enterprising, energetic, economical, and the very best class of citizens," observed a local

journalist. "And some of them can draw their check for a million! Altogether, near ten thousand acres will be growing fruit and truck tributary to this place during the present year." In early 1895 a *Macon Telegraph* correspondent reported that a party of sixteen arrived on "the coldest day in years. While they suffered some from cold, they seemed delighted...and said it was much better than the blinding snow-storms they left in Pittsburg. About two thousand acres in small farms have been sold to these progressive people, and they are going right ahead planting fruit farms."[28] Another undertaking was the Keystone Fruit Company, a joint marketing venture underwritten by several wealthy men from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. It included not only peach orchards but a nursery and vineyard. But the most important of these immigrant enterprises was Little Pennsylvania, which consisted of forty families "who have within two years worked a revolution in the land."[29] Eventually Minnesotans, Wisconsinites, Indianans, and even Swedes descended on Tifton and were absorbed into this melting pot of rural/urban progress.[30]

Highlighting their achievements and importance to the region's economy was the inception of the Empire Garden Midsummer Fair in 1893. This annual event began on the dining room table at Henry's home where samples of fruit grown on local farms were displayed. In the following year an 80' x 80' building was erected to house the fair, which attracted 1,000 entries. By 1897 there were 5,000 visitors viewing the exhibits.[31] With regard to the 1894 Mid-Summer Fair, the *Atlanta Journal* observed that "a more complete success in every way has never been chronicled in this whole southern country." In the same year, Ida Belle Williams contends, "Tifton's peach market exceeded that of Fort Valley," often regarded as the center of Georgia's peach industry.[32] Easy access to railroad facilities allowed fresh fruit to be whisked off to the big markets up North for big profits. In 1896 *Farm and Fireside*, a popular agricultural digest, estimated that a 200-acre peach orchard could earn as much as $50,000, or $250 an acre per year. "One grower, with an orchard of less than eight acres, sold his crop on the trees for $2,500, or more than $300 per acre," a lot of money in those days.[33] Although the fairgrounds were sold in 1900, the Tifton area still prided itself as the Empire Garden of the so-called Empire State of the South.

Meanwhile the enterprises of Henry's cousins in Albany, though weakened by the recent deaths of Nelson and Asa, were not insignificant or unrelated to the region's growing agricultural economy. A flattering 1887 account of Southwest Georgia called it "the richest farming section of the South" and conveyed the impression of Albany as a bustling trade center with "long rows of massive brick buildings" occupied by "wideawake progressive merchants," streets "clogged by vehicles of every kind and description," and where businessmen shipping by rail could take advantage of "low freight rates that no other interior Georgia city enjoys." What Albany needed to sustain further growth was access to banking capital, a cotton or wool factory, and more homes to accommodate its increasing population. There was not an unoccupied residence in the entire city. This account estimated the grocery trade and plantation supply business to be "the most profitable in the city."[34] It was, of course, the kind of business that had engaged several generations of Tifts since the 1820s.

Nelson's eldest son, Nelson Franklin Tift, represented a third generation to follow this pursuit. Born in 1847, he joined the Confederate Army "as soon as he was old enough to shoulder a rifle," according to one account. He was a member of Nelson's Rangers, part of the brigade commanded by Nathan Bedford Forrest, and took part in numerous cavalry engagements during the last two years of the war without being captured or wounded.[35] Aside from his military service, Nelson Franklin's life goals were never adventurous. He seemed content to follow others and uphold the traditions established by his father. After marrying into a distinguished Georgia family, the Halls of Oglethorpe who were linked to the even more distinguished Ashes of North Carolina, he assisted Henry in Tifton, then worked for Nelson and Asa in Albany, and upon their deaths headed his own firm, N. F. Tift & Co. For his last nine years in business he worked for his elder son in the Tift & Peed Grocery Co. "Papa was just not up to making money," according to his granddaughter, Aimee Hodges. He was just a "sweet gentleman."[36] What interested Nelson Franklin most, aside from his family, were civic affairs. He served for many years on the county commission, the city council, and the police commission, and in 1910 and 1911, years of significant growth, he was mayor. As his obituary recognized, Nelson Franklin "had been part and parcel of Albany for so many years that he seemed to be part of its historic foundations."[37] Though never a trailblazer, he ably filled the role of patriarch and Southern gentleman.

His younger brother, James Mercer Tift, born in 1859, was more innovative and reflective of the family's New England traits. In the fertile fields around Albany he raised cotton and a variety of fruits, including pears, watermelons, cantaloupes, and grapes, for shipment to agents in Birmingham, Chattanooga, Memphis, Pittsburgh, and Atlanta. The risks were substantial, from inclement weather and from rotten, damaged, or stolen fruit, but profits were great, especially if early-season pickings could reach the large population centers in the North. The railroad system that Nelson had put in place was critical to this process, and James Mercer did well. He even named a variety of cantaloupe he cultivated the "Lottie Mercedes" after his elder daughter and sent some samples to F. M. Norfleet, his factor in Memphis. "I received the biggest crate of the finest cantaloupes by express yesterday I ever saw," responded Norfleet, "and it was not necessary to have put your card in for me to know from whom they came." Norfleet intended to save some seeds to propagate the Lottie Mercedes in his area. Business trips by James Mercer may have also occasioned opportunities for extramarital misconduct. From The Atwood Hotel in Tulsa in 1907, he received the following message:

> I am indeed sorry about the scandal but you know how it is when "they say" so & so. We have had two good rains which has cooled things off. I inclose you a rough copy of a post card a party recd here from a young lady. It is the best ever. I may have to lay over in Memphis. If so I shall call on your friend so you can mail me his address as it is lonely unless you have a partner.[38]

This possible lapse in good behavior, however, was an exception rather than the rule amongst the otherwise puritanical Tifts.

James Mercer's most imaginative undertaking arose from a plot of land he owned just east of the Flint called Sand Hill. It was an oval-shaped sand formation of about 400 acres with dunes ranging twenty to thirty feet high, once the site of the Atlantic shoreline. Resembling a scene from the Sahara Desert, it was totally unsuitable for farming.[39] But it could be profitable by using the sand to manufacture a new kind of building material called sand-lime bricks. Although James Mercer held the land, he lacked the necessary capital, so he appealed to his wealthier cousin in Tifton to enter a partnership. Thereupon F. M. Harrington, representing the International Sand-Brick and Machinery Company in Washington, DC, made a sales pitch to Henry for his firm's services.

> With such a sand supply as Mr. Tift describes and the cheap labor of the South these bricks should be made at a cost not to exceed $2.50 a thousand. As they are superior in every way to any priced clay brick you can form an idea of the margin of manufacturing profit by comparing the cost of manufacture with the higher selling price for the best grade clay bricks. Assuming this to be $10 a thousand (which is very low) and manufacturing profit would be $7.50 a thousand. The plant will turn out 2000 bricks an hour or 20,000 bricks in a working day of 10 hours. The plant can be operated 24 hours a day every working day in the year.
>
> Such sand as Mr. Tift describes should make a brick of the highest grade, which would sell in this City at $25 to $30 a thousand. With the shipping facilities to Birmingham, Atlanta, and other cities...it would be very easy to sell bricks at highest prices prevailing in any of them.

Examples of sand-lime brick buildings included a brewery in Pennsylvania, an apartment complex in Atlantic City, and structures on the Howard University campus. For factory planning and construction, machinery, work force training, and initial operating expenses, Harrington requested a capitalization of $35,000. To make it a public offering and include a glassmaking operation would require a further $115,000.[40]

Such financial commitments were not likely beyond Henry's reach, but he was a canny businessman who was not apt to rush into risky ventures. Although the burning of a clay brick factory in Bainbridge seemed to open the way for a sand-lime operation in 1908, it was offset in 1909 by the merger of Cruger & Pace with Albany Brick, two of South Georgia's largest brick manufacturers, to form the Flint River Brick Co. Capitalized at $50,000, it could produce 15,000,000 bricks per year. "There is not room in Albany for two brick yards, each with a large output," argued N. J. Cruger, its president.[41] Little wonder Henry seemed reluctant. But sand-lime brick was allegedly a superior product, cheaper, more durable, and more attractive than its clay counterparts, and in March 1910 the Tifts finally agreed to construct a facility. With a capitalization of $50,000, it would feature many labor-saving devices, including an automatic carrier of sand from pits to mill, and would be located near the Thomasville branch of the Atlantic Coast Railway. "Albany Gets Another Big Manufacturing Plant," proclaimed the local newspaper, exuberant over utilization of the rich resources at Sand Hill.

> There is enough sand in those heaps to supply all the South's glass factories, sand-lime brick factories and similar industries calling for pure sand for generations to come. That other plants will quickly follow the one now to be erected is not doubted.
>
> The sand deposit on the Sand Hill place is unique in that it is mixed with no other substance. Begin at any point, selected with care or at random, and dig down, down, down, and one finds nothing but sand, sand, sand,—and then more sand. It is the greatest sand deposit in Georgia, and none to equal it is known to exist in any other state.

The projected plant, to be called the Tift Silica Brick Co., would produce 20,000 bricks daily and over 6,000,000 per year.[42] In bricks at least, Albany was booming.

The next generation of Albany Tifts (the fifth from Solomon) maintained the family tradition of involvement in business and public affairs. Nelson Franklin's eldest son, Maurice Wheeler Tift, was exemplary in this regard. Born in 1869, he attended Southwest Georgia A & M College in Cuthbert for two years, with his way paid by his great uncle Asa, then entered the University of Georgia (UGA) in 1884. His earliest job was overseeing his grandfather's toll bridge over the Flint. Then he left college to become a cashier for N. and A. F. Tift & Co. But Maurice, not content to languish in the comfort of his family's business, displayed the same kind of initiative that had influenced earlier Tifts to leave Connecticut. He first went to work for Wight, Weslosky, and Brown, wholesale grocers, traveling through Georgia and Alabama, then started his own business with W. J. Peed, their office and warehouse being located in Albany's 1856 railroad depot.[43] Maurice, however, never liked life on the road or being away from his wife Lula (Wooten), whom he had married in December 1890. When she had to tend her injured brother in Dawson a month later, Maurice was in distress. "You can't imagine how lonesome and really homesick I am, and how much you were missed last night," he wrote. "I can't stand to be in our room without you." In 1900, on a business trip to Blakely, Maurice expressed much the same concern for the health and well-being of Lula, who was ailing, that Amos Chapman did for Phebe sixty years earlier.

> Since leaving you this evening you have not been out of my thoughts a single moment and you can't...know how much I have feared that I have paid too much attention to my business and not observed your wants and your health

> as closely as I ought to have. Oh: Sweetheart you don't know how it hurt me to have others tell me that I should do something for you else your health would suffer, when I *should* be the very *first* to think of that and all the time, I am now ready to give up my business and everything else if need be and devote it all to your well fare. Have I been too economical and deprived you of anything that you needed? I fear I may have...but my Darling it has all been done for my intense love for you...for I have wanted to get something ahead that we might enjoy it together if I lived and I wanted something, in case I should be taken from you, to make you independent of others for these reasons my precious I have devoted so much time & thought to my business. ...I will say most positively my desire to save has not been that it might do me any good but it was entirely for you & [son] Asa.[44]

Unlike his great uncle, however, Maurice was not forced to give up his growing business or move a thousand miles for the sake of the woman he loved. In fact, his commercial and civic commitments seemed to intensify as he became more attached to his hometown.

Furthermore his interests were not limited to the grocery trade. Lula had inherited extensive lands, once called the Lampkin Place, in Calhoun and Dougherty Counties that Maurice managed. Known as Tift Farm, it was initially devoted to cotton and eventually expanded to 2,276 acres through periodic purchases by Lula from others in her family. No doubt her husband's profitable business enterprises made this expansion possible. Maurice became involved in civic affairs first by joining the Albany Guards, where he went from corporal to captain. For a number of years he served as city tax equalizer, then in 1913 he was elected alderman for the Albany City Council. In 1916 Maurice became mayor and in 1918 was elected to a second term. As war mayor, he not only directed patriotic causes and ran the government but initiated significant improvements, most notably completion of the Municipal Auditorium, paving of streets, and construction of a playground at Tift Park in north Albany.[45] A contemporary account ranked him as "one of the most progressive and satisfactory mayors who ever presided over the affairs of Albany. ...In public life Mr. Tift has upheld the family reputation for helpful participation in community affairs."[46] Like his grandfather, he exhibited Yankee entrepreneurial skills, not as a pioneer, but as a dedicated civic and business leader who kept his community moving into the twentieth century.

Charles Rawson, Jr., son of Nelson's eldest daughter Annie and C. W. Rawson, a merchant from Washington County, exhibited a similar spirit. He took pride in being Nelson's descendant and eventually inherited his diaries. Charles learned his trade as private secretary in his grandfather's firm and, according to one source, "absorbed many of the elder man's excellent ideas." In 1888 he embarked on his own grocery business with John Mock and later a hardware partnership with Roe Wetherbee. Eventually he became president of Albany Hardware & Mill Supply Co., one of the largest wholesale houses in South Georgia, with twenty-five employees and distribution in several states. Like other Tifts, Charles was committed to serving his community, as alderman (1903 and 1923) and as mayor (1906–1907). Recognized as "a reliable business man and public-spirited citizen," in politics, like Nelson, he was a strong Democrat. During his mayoral term, Rawson not only brought street and sidewalk paving to Broad Street, the city's main thoroughfare, but better sewer and water service, an electric fire alarm system, and a reorganization of the public schools. When out of office, his efforts were largely responsible for the city's electric streetcar system (1920), the Albany Fair Association, and the Rawson Park and Hilsman Heights residential areas. "Few men have exercised a wider influence for the upbuilding of Albany" is the assessment of the county history.[47]

Notwithstanding their many municipal contributions, neither M. W. Tift nor Rawson saw fit to address the racial inequities of Albany, where segregated schools were a fact of life and few blacks could vote. Indeed their contemporary, W. E. B. DuBois, on visiting the city, called it "the centre of the Negro problem—the centre of those nine million men who are America's dark heritage from slavery and the slave-trade." Most culpable for this state of affairs was the "merchant of the Black Belt" who was

> the most prosperous man in the section. So skillfully and so closely has he drawn the bonds of the law about the tenant, that the black man has often simply to choose between pauperism and crime; he "waives" all homestead exemptions in his contract; he cannot touch his own mortgaged crop, which the laws put almost in the full control of the land-owner and of the merchant. When the crop is growing the merchant watches it like a hawk; as soon as it is ready for market he takes possession of it, sells it, pays the land-owner his rent, subtracts his bill for supplies, and if, as sometimes happens, there is anything left, he hands it over to the black serf for his Christmas celebration.[48]

Maurice Tift provides a perfect categorical fit for DuBois's observations, but he names no names, and there is no evidence that Maurice's dual paternal role as civic leader and merchant ever deserved this kind of grim portrayal.

Albany's population growth at the turn of the century was substantial, from 4,606 in 1900 to 8,190 in 1910, with a 79/21% regional black/white ratio, but no less interest centered on Tifton where gains were more modest, 1,384 in 1900 to 2,381 in 1910, with a 34/66% regional black/white ratio.[49] What made the latter such a dynamic force in South Georgia was Henry's continued involvement in virtually every facet of its development. So successful was his timber business that he set up branches in Adel, Ocilla, Atlanta, and Alton, Florida. But he had the foresight to realize that as Tifton's timber resources were dwindling, cotton and other field crops held the best chance for profitability.[50] Therefore in 1896 he founded the Piedmont Cotton Mills in East Point, Georgia, and in 1900 organized Tifton Cotton Mills. The *Tifton Gazette* repeatedly used the words "gigantic" and "mammoth" to describe the latter.

> Out side of the building, the 40 operatives' cottages are nearing completion, and form quite a town of their own. The cottages are built to accommodate two families each. The big brick water reservoir built to hold 700,000 gallons has just been completed. ...The mammoth boilers are already in place and the 160 foot brick smokestack is a perfect specimen to the bricklayers art. The plant will be lighted by electricity throughout. In order to get an idea of the magnitude of his enterprise, a personal inspection is necessary. It is the most gigantic plant that Tifton has ever under taken.[51]

By 1903 it was operating at maximum efficiency, producing 8,000 pounds of yarn weekly and showing a yearly profit of $22,000. Henry was also a major stockholder for Tifton Ice and Power Company (1902) and served on the boards of Tifton Ginning Company (1900), Tifton Light and Power Company (1902), and the First National Bank (1903). With three other banks in existence by 1905, Tifton, unlike Albany, did not lack capital. To complement his sawmill, Henry installed a shingle factory with a capacity of 10,000 shingles a day, and to complement his cotton mill and ginning company, he created the Tifton Knitting Mill, which could produce several thousand pairs of hose daily.[52] The *Gazette* reported that in 1904 the Tifton district had a ten-year gain of $133,113 in tax returns, and Western Union

Telegraph receipts for May 1906 were $410, over $160 higher than receipts for May 1905. "The business has grown until it is almost beyond the ability of one man to handle it."[53] These figures were sure signs of growth. But there were also setbacks. Tifton was plagued by a series of fires, including the destruction of Henry's sawmill in April 1898, with estimated losses of over $15,000 and 100 men out of work.[54] By the time the Sadie Hotel was destroyed in 1905, he had installed a more effective pumping system in his rebuilt mill. But it was only the "gallant work by volunteers," reported the *Gazette*, that the town itself was saved. Since Tifton had no water works, the deep well at the mill was critical to quenching the blaze, "and there are few better trained firefighters than Messrs. H. H. and E. H. Tift and the men in their employ." Even more devastating was a blaze that broke out on 4 November 1904 in a four-story building downtown and spread to eight other businesses and residences. It occurred under suspicious circumstances, noted the *Gazette*:

> After a traveling group of men and women had preached for several days on the streets of Tifton, causing some disturbance, the city council passed a resolution to request these evangelists to leave town. Infuriated, the band gathered on the northwest corner of Love Avenue and Second Street; weird sounds issued from the spot. Tifton citizens could not understand all of the speeches, but could hear the pronouncing of a curse and the stamping of feet on the spot. The incantation, "In forty-eight hours something terrible will happen in Tifton!" floated from the corner distinctly enough for by-standers to hear; then the group shook Tifton dust off their feet and stalked away.[55]

Forty-eight hours later the blaze began, destroying mainly property of those who had passed the resolution. Three days later a fire destroyed Henry's knitting mill, with losses estimated at $12,000. Again arson was suspected. While nearly all citizens were watching the fire, burglars were breaking into a drug store and an adjacent jewelry business.[56] Progress, Tiftonites learned, was not always a certain outcome of sobriety and hard work, but they could always count on their Connecticut Yankee founder to provide leadership to recover from setbacks and move to a higher level of prosperity.

Henry's paternal role in the region's development was formally recognized in 1905 by the creation of a county bearing his name. Discussions began in February when a committee of Tifton citizens met to make plans to

extract ninety square miles from Berrien County, ninety-five from Irwin, and sixty-eight from Worth, and to call their new county Tift. A month later a mass meeting at city hall approved these arrangements. While there was some reluctance to the change in Worth and Berrien, citizens in areas designated for inclusion approved for reasons of convenience. A Tifton delegation, including Henry, paved the way for the passage of a bill in Atlanta, but the Georgia legislature insisted that no county could be named for a living person. Hence it was renamed for Nelson. Still the *Gazette* assured its readers that however much this act recognized Nelson's contributions, county citizens "had in mind their own fellow citizen."[57] An indication of how Henry and his associates engineered the passage comes from an anecdote of his advice to civic leaders of Adel who were trying to create their own county (Cook) the following year. "I tell you men, just get your bill drawn, put fifteen thousand dollars in your pocket, go to Atlanta when the legislature meets and buy your county and come home."[58] With no opposition in the House or Senate, the Tift County bill became law in August. Aside from the political and social status this measure provided, it coincided with a change in emphasis from timber to agriculture, which provided the county a permanent economic identity.[59]

Henry Tift, like his late uncle in Albany, was becoming a venerable and larger-than-life figure. Exactly how many enterprises he owned or underwrote prior to World War I would be impossible to estimate, but his son, T. W. Tift, in a 1958 speech, makes a creditable attempt. Underlying all else was his investment in the land.

> At one time, he held in his own right 80,000 acres of timber land in South Georgia, and had an interest with Henry Sears, organizer of Sears-Roebuck, in 120,000 acres in Florida between Liveoak and Perry. ...The total of the two tracts of timber land amounted to 200,000 acres and were possibly the largest timber holdings in the South at that time.

Within Tifton his reputation as a developer was unmatched. Structures for which he was largely responsible included

> the First Baptist Church on Love Avenue, which resulted from a very large donation from him; The Bank of Tifton, which is a gem of architecture; the grammar school near the water works; the High School on Tift Avenue; the Courthouse; the United States Post Office; Armour and Company; the Tifton Cotton Mills; the Tift Building across from the Courthouse...the

> brick tobacco warehouses on Second Street...[the] Imperial Tobacco Company Building...the Cotton warehouses in Block #7, and the Farmers Ginning Company; the Colonial Store...which he operated as a wholesale grocery company; the Tifton Ice and Power Company, which he organized to furnish ice and lights for Tifton as it grew; the Tifton Compress Company to compress the cotton for export shipment...[and] the old National Highway 41 was graded by his mules with two wheel scrapes formerly used in building his tram roads...at no expense to the County or the State.

Henry also financed the building of the Myon Hotel, which replaced the Sadie in downtown Tifton, owned and operated the Tifton and Northeastern Railroad, and built and owned the Tifton, Thomasville, and Gulf Railroad, nicknamed the "Turtle, Tappin and Gopher."[60] To honor his legal advisor, he donated four city blocks to create C. W. Fulwood Park. In 1909 the *Gazette* announced that 490 acres of his 28,736 acres of woodland in Tift County would be available on easy terms for homes.[61] In 1914, at a cost of $10,000, Henry constructed an eight-mile boulevard, thirty-six feet wide, around the city.[62] Hardly a local enterprise was untouched by his guiding hand and generosity.

The enterprise that was perhaps closest to his heart, because it subsumed every other kind of development, was the chamber of commerce. Organized in 1897 as the Tifton Board of Trade, Henry became a member of its board. Its motto typified his approach to civic affairs: "If it's a good thing, get it for Tifton." In January 1913 he called a citizens' meeting to raise funds, aware no doubt how much the chamber benefited his own enterprises. "Mr. Tift explained the purpose of the meeting was to put Tifton on the upgrade, and to keep it there," explained the *Gazette*.[63] As a further commitment to the town he founded, Henry served a term as mayor, over two decades on the city council, and chairman when Tifton adopted a commission form of governance in 1921.

To some extent Henry's paternal initiatives can be likened to those of William E. Dodge and William Pitt Eastman, Yankee entrepreneurs from New York and New Hampshire whose capitalization during the 1870s led to the timber industry on 300,000 acres of pineland in the Forks between the Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers. The coming of these capitalists, as Dodge County's historian observes, was "hailed by the war-impoverished people of this section as the harbinger of an era of peace and prosperity." But it was only a small part of Dodge's Northern financial empire, and even his Georgia

Land and Timber Company was incorporated in New York. Furthermore, much of his investment was devoted to the development of large sawmills on St. Simons Island and their river rafting connection. Most importantly, Dodge was an absentee paternalist who detested the slave culture of the region, had strongly supported the Union cause, and rarely visited the state. His sons, Anson and Norman, as well as Eastman took a more personal hand in the development of the town of Eastman by donating land for public amenities and attempting to create a winter resort for Northern capitalists. But they neither embraced the culture of their locale nor nurtured its development nearly to the extent of Henry or his Albany kin who, though no less Yankee in spirit, became totally immersed in the growth of the settlements they had founded.[64]

Another primary interest of Henry, as with Nelson and other Tifts, was education. By 1898, according to his son, there were only two local schools, whereupon Henry decided to focus his attention on education. Nowhere was this commitment more evident than his successful bid to bring a state agricultural college to Tift County. In October 1906 he offered 200 acres of land and a donation of an additional one-sixth to any sum raised by the county. As a result of citizen subscriptions, the Tift delegation went to the bidding in Albany the next month with an offer of $30,000 in cash and 315 acres of land along the railroad right-of-way north of Tifton. Facing stiff opposition from Dougherty County, Camilla, Pelham, and Ashburn, Henry raised his offer to $55,000, free lights, water and telephone service for ten years, a sewer system, and the acreage. The contest became a financial tug-of-war between Henry and J. L. Hand of Pelham, but after six ballots Tift was triumphant. "Tifton's father did it with his little hatchet!" exclaimed the *Gazette*. Known as the Second District A & M School when the institution opened in January 1908, it later took the name of Georgia statesman Abraham Baldwin, another Connecticut Yankee.[65] The creation of the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station in 1918 on another 206 acres donated by Henry had a longer incubation period, going back to John Burwell Greene's experiments and Cycloneta farms in the 1890s. But legislation for it came about through the Georgia Landowners Association, a movement organized in 1912 in which Henry played a leading role. Tifton was selected largely because of Henry's donation and his agricultural interests. In fact, Silas Starr, the station's director, worked out of Henry's office at first,

much as Greene did at Cycloneta, and it became the site for the United States office of tobacco investigation.[66]

Henry also donated six acres of land to establish a Tift County industrial school for blacks. But his philanthropic endeavors in education, like his business interests, were not limited to Tifton. In May 1901 when his wife Bessie, an 1878 graduate, attended commencement exercises at Monroe College in Forsyth, she was elected president of the alumnae society. Its first project was to purchase books for the library, a practice Bessie continued for the rest of her life.[67] Then in 1903 she took part in groundbreaking ceremonies for a four-story dormitory, Upshaw Hall. "I strike for God; I strike for the girls of Monroe College; I strike in the name of my aged Mother," she said. Then, needing funds for an expansion of nearby Gibson Hall to accommodate a growing student body, the president, C. H. S. Jackson, went before the Georgia Baptist Convention in 1905 with an appeal for $37,000. As failure loomed, Henry, seated away from his wife, sent her a note: "Bessie, you may give the $37,000," a message which she conveyed to the chairman. Buoyed by Henry's benevolence and a fiscal year surplus exceeding $12,500, the trustees expressed confidence that the institution would take its place "in the front rank of Female Colleges."[68] Subsequently Gibson Hall was renamed Tift Hall, and the institution itself became Bessie Tift College. Upon a further enlargement in 1908, Bessie rejoiced to the president. "God be praised! I felt the day I stood under God's sky and broke earth for the new dormitory that God was with Monroe, and truly He is there, and will never leave us." As for the feelings of Henry, who never publicly professed religiosity, she was less certain. "You, perhaps, may know. He talks so little!"[69]

But his commitment to education was never in doubt, and with continued benefactions his actions spoke louder than words. In 1906 Henry provided $8,000 for the purchase of a tract of land next to the Tift campus to prevent a cotton oil mill from locating on it, and in 1908 he agreed to give $20,000 for each $100,000 the college raised. A later president estimated that his lifetime contributions exceeded $125,000.[70] No less important than Henry's dollars and cents were the human contributions of Bessie, according to the college historian.

> Where figures do not exist, Mrs. Tift's generosity extended annually to the library through the Alumnae is well known to older members of the

> organization; and the many girls for whose education she became responsible are witness to her liberality and kindness. ...Whatever the amount of Mr. Tift's gifts or hers, mere money could not accurately portray the love and interest she poured out on the institution. As long as she was able, she served as a faithful trustee and always made it a point to speak to the assembled students each time she came to a trustee meeting. When she entered the dining hall every girl rose in respect; her opening words to them were always the same, "Girls, I love every one of you."[71]

Although Bessie Tift College was the most direct recipient of the Tifts' generosity, Bessie became involved in many other religious, cultural, and intellectual pursuits. The Woman's Missionary Society first met in her parlor in 1891, and she became its president for the next forty-five years. Through her influence, Henry contributed generously to Baptist missions in China. He was hardly a reluctant giver, but such was Bessie's enthusiasm for distributing his money to worthy causes that some restraints were necessary. According to his granddaughter, "Henry told Bessie before she attended any meeting, especially church-related, that she should sit on her hands, in other words, don't volunteer any money. But she often did and Henry came through."[72] Bessie not only taught the Bessie Tift Sunday school class in her own church but one at the agricultural school, and for five years was president of the Tifton Woman's Temperance Union. Tifton's public library was an outgrowth of the Literary and Social Club, organized by Orville's wife Eliza and Edmund's wife Kittie in 1905 to "stimulate public spirit." Through the Twentieth Century Library Club, they provided means for its sustenance. Bessie was not initially involved, but at Henry's urging she joined the club in 1906 and became president for life. In 1907 she became vice president of the Georgia Federation of Clubs, a position she held for many years. As a result of Bessie's service as a trustee of Tallulah Falls School, Henry provided lumber for its first dormitory. He also contributed to Georgia Tech and Mt. Berry College in Rome and in 1912 became a charter trustee of South Georgia State Normal College (now Valdosta State University).[73] Such was his generosity that one year, in the peak of his prospering lumber business, he earned $90,000 of which he donated $80,000 to advance education and other causes.[74]

Although Henry was consumed by business and civic responsibilities, his life was not just work. In 1904 he and Bessie attended the St. Louis World's Fair where he supplied lumber for the Georgia Building, a replica of General

John Gordon's home. At one of the receptions, according to Tifton's biographer, Bessie "wished to summon a maid. She pushed a button and awaited the maid's arrival." Suddenly, there was a loud commotion with the arrival of the fire department at the Georgia building. "Bess realized that she had not summoned a maid but turned in a fire alarm!" While Henry did not accompany Bessie and her sister Florie (and husband Will) Pickard to Europe the following year, he did take the family on a pilgrimage to Mystic. In 1906 he established a permanent summer residence there by purchasing the old family home on Meeting House Hill for $4,300 when his aunt Frances (Pyncheon) died at age 80.[75]

Henry was drawn back to Mystic partly by his love of the sea. This attachment led to his financing in 1902 of a five-mast schooner, the *Jenny R. Dubois*, the largest wood sailing vessel ever built in Connecticut. It was constructed by his nephew Charles Holmes at a cost of $100,000 in the West Mystic Shipyards with yellow pine lumber from Henry's Tifton mill. It could carry 3,400 tons of coal or 2,000,000 feet of lumber. Unfortunately it was rammed and sunk on a 1903 voyage from Philadelphia to Boston by a German steamer seven miles from Block Island, Rhode Island.[76] Henry also owned two sailing crafts, the *Annie* and the *Wasp*, and a two-cylinder, ten-horsepower, twenty-five-foot motor boat, the *Chaperone*, that he bought in 1910, one of the earliest motorized craft available. According to Ida Belle Williams, Henry was

> seldom happier than when, with his hand on the tiller, he was sailing over the waters of the Sound. Also there was swimming and there were clam-bakes. All these things Henry loved. His merry, blue eyes would twinkle with happiness as he saw everybody about him enjoying the fun. His sister and her family, the Beebes, usually were of the party occupying the old house each summer. Various members of Bessie's family would visit there at different times. The Mystic summers were happy times.

Henry's house in Tifton, one of the finest in the city, in addition to providing comfort, served as a family social center. One such occasion was the seventy-fifth birthday in 1904 of Bessie's mother, Cecilia Willingham. "It was a brilliant occasion," observes Williams, a convivial reunion of the Tift and Willingham clans. A sumptuous feast of turkey with all the trimmings was followed by "a heart-stirring program rendered amid tears of joy, or

mirthful laughter in the candle-lighted parlor, cheerful with its great logs upon the tall brightly polished brass andirons." These gatherings continued for the next ten years until the matriarch's death in 1914.[77]

However busy they might be, Henry and Bessie devoted the greatest amount of attention to their sons—Henry, Jr., Thomas Willingham, and Amos Chapman Tift. The eldest was born in Washington, DC, in 1886 in a Pullman car while Bessie was returning home from summer vacation in Mystic. After attending Tifton schools, Henry, Jr. entered Mercer University where his uncle, W. L. Pickard, was president. After graduating in 1906 he spent a summer touring Europe and then attended Eastman Business College in Poughkeepsie, New York. His future seemed assured on returning to Tifton. Ever the dutiful son, he assumed a position in his father's cotton mill and took up many of his parents' causes. On his marriage to Virginia Pound of Chattanooga in 1914, the *Gazette* called him "a worthy son of a worthy sire" whose "sterling qualities" made him "a prominent factor in business circles" and won him many close friends. It was also a marriage that connected the Tifton Tifts with some of the most influential families of the South. What most consumed his energies, however, were civic affairs, following his father's precedent. The younger Henry was vice president of the Bank of Tifton, president of Tifton Realty Co., a director of Willingham-Tift Lumber Co. in Atlanta, a trustee of South Georgia A & M College (later Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, ABAC), a president of the Tift County Board of Trade and the Tifton Kiwanis Club, and finance chairman for the Second District movement for better roads. He was also a devout Baptist, a Shriner, a Mason, an Elk, and a Knight Templar. Unassuming and gentle like his father, Henry, Jr. was an effective public speaker and spokesman for community causes. Any notion, however, that he was free from financial concerns is dispelled by a glance at his tax returns. On a 1926 income of $23,100, he had deductions of $20,008, including $10,649 in farm expenses and $6,376 in interest payments.[78]

Likewise, Amos, the youngest child who was born in Atlanta in 1891, had an assured niche. On returning to Tifton after graduation from Mercer, he entered the automobile and garage business where he sold Dusenbergs and worked as an oil distributor for Shell. He also engaged in farming and real estate ventures and constructed various commercial buildings in Tifton. Amos usually spent the summers with his parents in Mystic where he learned to love the water and pilot boats. This interest led him to fund swimming

facilities in Tifton and to construct two lakes outside the city. No less civic-minded than others of his family, he was also a trustee for Bessie Tift College and a member of the Tifton City Commission. To his niece, Virginia Brumby, "Uncle Amos was not ambitious. Very sweet, but didn't do much." His grandson Amos (Chappie) confirms that he had little aptitude for making money and that his wife Lutrelle, whom he married in 1918, "was always giving him hell about his business." According to grandnephew Jerry Tift, she "wore the pants in the family."[79] Ida Belle Williams refers to Amos as a "friendly, kind man of few words." "I never heard him say anything unkind about anybody," recalls his daughter Lutrelle. "He was quiet, but he was very intelligent and when he spoke people listened. He was a mathematical whiz and could do math in his head."[80] Better suited for a more leisure or academic life, Amos shared none of the Tift inclinations for business.

Thomas Willingham Tift, the middle child, was born in Albany in 1889 at the home of Bessie's sister, Julia Bacon, whose husband was a physician. Often called Tommy or Willingham, he had more cosmopolitan tastes than his brothers and was always eager to extend his powers beyond Tifton. Some of his interest in the wider world may be attributed to his early enrollment in the Culver Military Academy in Indiana where he became a member of the first Black Horse Troop in America. At an exhibition before military dignitaries in Cleveland he recalls being the only rider able to "go over a high hurdle on a horse standing up backwards." But when he dismounted he twisted his ankle and fell flat in the mud! At Mercer University he was an able student, leading his mathematics professor to say, after Tommy made a 100 on his final examination, "You have learned enough about this now to teach it." After graduating from Mercer in 1910, he enrolled at Yale where he studied law and obtained a second baccalaureate degree in 1912. Afterwards he gained exposure to an even broader world by accompanying a group of widowed women on a European tour.[81]

Uncertain about what to do next and showing no desire to return to Georgia, Tommy tarried in the Northeast, leading his father to remark that he could not understand how a university like Yale could make such a fool out of a young man that he would not want to return to his hometown. Tommy also rebelled against the smothering effect of his mother's religiosity. It seems ironic that Henry could not understand his son, whose traits resembled his own early desire to leave Mystic and the religious influence of his father, Amos Chapman. After a few years of indecision Tommy had a

breakdown in summer 1914, experiencing palpitations and sinking spells. He left Connecticut to seek a cure at a spa near Karlsruhe in Southern Germany. Doctors advised him to live outdoors, get plenty of rest, avoid strenuous activity, and take both hot and cold baths. On 23 July, just as the Great War was about to commence, he wrote to his mother:

> At first the main trouble I had was keeping in good spirits. ...Did not know what to do. I knew I never could stand the trip home and if I came here and got worse then what would I do? But everything has turned out all right, and I think that most of the trouble was due to fright and giving in too much to my feelings. ...The greatest change I think has been in my circulation. When I came here my hands and feet were cold all the time and I was quite pale in the face. Now everything seems to be perfectly normal. Don't know what it is about this water here, but there's something miraculous in the way it has brought me around in about eight days.[82]

Able to sleep at night and feel good in the day, Tommy gained a new sense of direction. Contrary to earlier inclinations, he returned to Georgia to help with his father's business.

This line of work, of course, was not only a Tift tradition but a natural milieu for Tommy. He recalls working in Henry's sawmill at age twelve for fifty cents a day, and then clerking on Saturday nights in the commissary where he sold sugar for ten cents a pound.[83] Business was in his blood, and if he was not prepared to plunge into the big business ponds of the Northeast, he could at least survive, like his brothers, in the smaller pond of Tifton. After about five years in South Georgia, a compromise was reached when he was dispatched to manage Piedmont Cotton Mills and his father's other enterprises in the larger but still familiar waters of Atlanta. This decision coincided with his marriage to Catherine Terrell, a native of Greenville, Georgia, who was raised in Pittsburgh.[84] "Mother was a real beauty," recalls her daughter Catherine (Tee), and she had many suitors. They met by chance in Atlanta at the Chamberlain-Johnson-Dubose Department Store in an elevator. Catherine was with a suitor on the way to lunch in the fourth floor tea room, but she had already heard of Tommy from a mutual friend. They were married in 1921 and Atlanta seemed the logical place for their home—he because of business and she for social reasons. Both had experienced too much of the outside world to return to either Tifton or

Greenville.[85] What Tommy's presence in Atlanta did was endow the family with a permanent stake in the life of Georgia's largest metropolitan area.

Meanwhile Henry was aging. He reached eighty in 1921, and the growing stature of his sons and the maturity of his beloved community signified the passing of a generation. More than anything else, the closing of the Tift timber mill in 1916 marked the dawn of a new era, according to Williams, "the era of agriculture." All of the timber had been cut.[86] Also Henry's prodigious powers were on the wane, and many of his business interests were being assumed by his son Tommy and others. By this time H. H. Tift was not only the wealthiest man in South Georgia but a shining example to the next generation. One tribute recognized him as a "captain of industry" who "not only learned to make money" but also "how to spend it." Former Governor William Northen, in *Men of Mark*, attributed this trait to his Connecticut origins. "He has the New England thrift that strives to make money, and then has the New England judgment which tells him when and where to place his benefactions so that they will be of most advantage to the community; and no worthy cause has ever appealed to him in vain." Henry advised young men to be "honest and fair in all business transactions. Give careful and painstaking investigation to every contemplated enterprise before investing time and money. Always work with steady, intelligent and painstaking effort, having a distinct purpose to be accomplished."[87] Once estimated to be worth seven million dollars, Henry died intestate on 4 February 1922. His assets were valued at $968,668 and distributed between his wife and sons.[88] Real estate holdings were to be distributed by the Tifton Realty Company, administered by Tommy and his two children.[89]

More important than money, however, was the moral message that Henry conveyed to his family in his final days. Despite a month-long series of vertigo attacks, he was still a man of business. To his bedside he summoned his financial advisors, Roswell Smith and Tommy, seeking assurances that his taxes and debts would be paid. "We will fix everything all right," the latter responded. But his most dramatic encounter was with Bessie, who made one last attempt to save his soul. She asked,

> "Henry can you hear me?" He said "Yes." Then she said, "Henry, darling; I love you. You have been the best son, the best husband, the best father, the

> best brother, the best friend and the best man in the world," and again, "Can you hear me?" "Yes," he said.
>
> "You are trusting in Jesus, aren't you, darling?" "Yes," he said. "Thank God," she said; "I have been praying for that these many years." Later he said, "I can't hear anything, but it is all right."

Whether Henry heard anything his wife had said or was conscious enough to comprehend it cannot be determined, but what Bessie could not understand was how a man could exhibit so much goodness without having made a commitment to Christ. Like his uncle Nelson, but in striking contrast to his parents, his world was almost completely secular. Still it was necessary for this Yankee tycoon to give tacit support to such an inherent part of Southern culture for the sake of survival. Henry always respected his wife's religiosity and kept his prenuptial promise by attending countless church services with her. His last words, to his brother-in-law, W. B. Willingham, were, "Take care of Bess."[90]

"The Oak Has Fallen," announced the *Gazette*, which recognized Henry Tift as a "man of national character" whose "loss is a national loss." After a funeral service at the First Baptist Church in Tifton, his body was transported to Connecticut, via Atlanta, accompanied by an honorary escort of eight close friends. On reaching Mystic another service was held at the home of Henry's sister, Annie (Buckley), before the body was laid to rest in a plot overlooking the Mystic River near the other Tift burials in Elm Grove Cemetery. As a cold east wind blew across the gravesite, the pastor from Tifton, C. W. Durden, offered a moving epitaph: "Today Georgia and the South give back to his native Connecticut the mortal remains of Henry Harding Tift. Gladly would we have laid him to rest in our midst and above his sleeping dust erected a monument to which we would have pointed with pride. ...But like Jacob of old his last request was that he be buried with his fathers in his native land."[91] Of the tributes paid to Henry, the greatest came from Governor Hugh Dorsey who, according to family lore, sent a telegram to Bessie saying, "Your husband died the greatest living Georgian." The most poignant, however, is an oft-told story among Tiftonians about how one day he was in his office fingering a stack of notes due and said, "If I should call these notes, I would make a million dollars; but if I did, I'd break every man whose note I hold. Not a note shall be called."[92]

Part III

Continuities

6

Twentieth-Century Tifts

> The only trouble with these New Englanders, as I see it, is that we are not getting them fast enough.[1]—H. T. McIntosh

Much in the manner of Nelson's influence in Albany, Henry's legacy on Tifton and his side of the family was enormous. A unique feature of the fifth and sixth generations is that although some members were born earlier, virtually all of them identified with the twentieth century. Also their ties with Connecticut were becoming tenuous. Their continuous immersion in Southern culture was taking its toll, in their attachment to the land and climate as well as their religious and racial inclinations and marital preferences. Increasingly the family divide was less between the Mystic Tifts and their Georgia counterparts than between those who had settled in Albany and Tifton. Still the most telling characteristic of the Georgia Tifts was a capacity for leadership, especially in business and public service—a continuing consequence of their New England roots. Among the Tifton Tifts these qualities were most evident with Thomas Willingham Tift, his son Tommy, his nephew Henry Harding Tift III, and his cousin Katherine Tift Jones. For the Albany Tifts they were most obvious with Maurice Wheeler Tift, his son Mercer Sherman, his nephew Richard Ashe Tift, and niece Julia Smith Oliver. Although they remained primarily in Southern Georgia, their influence was expanding to metropolitan Macon and Atlanta and even into Alabama.

Following Henry Harding's death, Bessie became head of the Tifton branch. A widow for fourteen years, she turned even more to religion for strength. Although Bess received a huge inheritance and earned over $10,000 in the year before her death, "things of the world meant nothing to her," recollects her granddaughter, Catherine Tift Porter (Tee). "She was the most religious person I've ever known. If you were around her you prayed a lot, including formal morning and evening prayers." Though not vain, Bessie was also a "big exercise freak," mainly for health. She did some exercises in

bed by vigorously flinging her legs up and down. She would "walk up and down our porch in Atlanta," Tee recalls, "while I read the newspaper to her. Active mind and body—two things at once. I can still hear her laugh." When Catherine and her younger brother got into childhood quarrels, Bess, in a spirit of Christian forgiveness, would have them kneel, pray together, and promise to stop fighting, but as soon as she left they would resume.[2] She also found comfort in the companionship of her sister Florie (her "Other Self") who shared her Christian commitment until Florie died in 1930.

Even closer to Bessie were her sons. After their society marriage in Chattanooga in 1914, Henry, Jr. and Virginia Pound Tift ("Big Dolly") moved to Tifton where they built a bungalow on College Street and had two children, Virginia (Presh) and Henry III (Buster). But their mother became desperately ill in 1918 with what was misdiagnosed as tuberculosis brought on by childbirth. Henry sent her to a sanitarium in Asheville, North Carolina, where she died from the influenza epidemic that was sweeping the nation after the Great War. Henry was so upset that he refused to live in their house anymore and moved into Bessie's home with the children.[3] Bessie thus became a surrogate mother. A decade later she became total caregiver for the children when Henry, Jr. tragically died. While attending the Eastman Business College in New York in his youth, he received a severe blow to his head while playing ice hockey. He functioned almost normally thereafter, but was never quite the same, and in 1909 had a vertigo attack. Unfortunately Henry had a passion for automobiles and persuaded his father to buy the first privately owned vehicle in Tifton. He later opened a dealership and always owned a nice car. But Henry enjoyed driving fast, and on the evening of 12 June 1929, while speeding in his Nash coupe, he failed to negotiate a turn from Sixth to College streets and struck a large pine tree. "The front bumper and axle were bent around the tree, the engine was knocked back against the driver's seat and the front of the car was completely wrecked as any ever was," reported the *Tifton Gazette*. Henry was hurled from his car and never regained consciousness. With his whole right side crushed, he died three hours later.[4]

His brother Tommy thereupon assumed a more patriarchal role. By this time he was spending most of his time in Atlanta operating Piedmont Cotton Mills and the Willingham-Tift Lumber Company. He was also president of

the Atlanta Commercial Exchange in the early 1920s and joined the Capital City Club. "Father was a party boy," observes his daughter. "He was good-looking, and he worked hard—seven days a week. But he played hard." His wife Catherine (Pip) also enjoyed mingling with the city's business and cultural elite, though she, unlike her husband, had "little education." To compensate for her "superficiality of culture," Tommy sent her on a European grand tour with one of his Yale professors.[5] She then became a homemaker and mother for their two children, Catherine and Tommy, Jr., born in 1922 and 1927 respectively. Above all, Pip was a big-city girl and wanted to spend as little time as possible in Tifton.

She could not, however, avoid the pilgrimages to Mystic, which became, after the death of Henry Sr., an annual ritual. For Catherine they entailed tedium and homesickness, especially with her husband back in Atlanta taking care of business. "I nearly froze up here yesterday," she wrote in August 1927, and "Bessie has been real sick." Even worse, Tommy's "Uncle Ned," Silas Edwin Beebe, married to his aunt Helen, was dying. He had "been sick in bed for a week," she reported on the 21st. "The last two days he has refused to eat or even take his medicine. He is like all old people. His mind is gone and he can hardly talk." Sickness and gloom seemed to prevail. Tommy's Aunt Caroline was also confined to bed with an "opening in her side" that was "draining awfully," and Buster had been ill with bronchial pneumonia. "All this sickness is getting on my nerves some. ...And it has rained every day for three weeks. ...And to put more of a gloom on this Henry [Jr.] came yesterday and said that there were thirty cases of infantile paralysis in New London. I had carried both children over there in the morning and back that afternoon with me, not knowing they had an epidemic."[6] The other theme of their correspondence, in keeping with Yankee tradition, was business. Catherine expressed delight that the price of cotton was up and asked Tommy to buy her more stock. But she was most concerned with their personal finances and the costs of staying in Connecticut with two small children and their servant Ada. "I tell you I could go to Europe on what it cost to come up here. It will cost all of $500 or more. ...Next summer I am going to take that money and go out West or somewhere."[7]

By the following summer these frustrations had dissipated, and it was Tommy's turn to suffer. Although business at the mill was good and getting better, he was confined for six weeks to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore

for treatment of a renal condition. "I hope this treatment will clear me up for good," he told Catherine. "[Dr.] Frantz said I was in pretty good physical condition but there was too much puss [sic] in my urine...from my prostate gland infection." On discharge he embarked on business trips to Philadelphia and New York but missed his family. "I miss my babies more than I can tell you and have had to keep mighty busy to avoid being unhappy." Meanwhile Pip was gaining a new appreciation for New England by going on an excursion with friends (without children) to Marblehead Neck, northeast of Boston. It was highlighted by a "big dance" at the Eastern Yacht Club where the harbor was aglow with red lights and fireworks. "Everyone was so nice to me and at the dance there I was really popular to my surprise. I felt like a debutante—almost forgot I was getting old and was the mother of two children!!"[8] She did dutifully mention how much she missed her husband, but she seemed more engrossed with the expensive yachts, homes, and spas of her newfound friends who presented a classier vacation alternative than the Tift homestead in Mystic.

While Tommy's father may have been at one time the richest man in Georgia, the Tifts were not in the same financial league with the Northeastern plutocrats, and Atlanta society could not compare with that of Boston. In fact, financial concerns seemed constant. While in Baltimore, Tommy advised his wife to "watch your expenses. We want to get out of debt." He was hardly poor, but most of his money was tied up in property and investments that were either relatively inaccessible or risky. Bessie too, from distant Tifton, expressed frequent concern over money, and especially for the welfare of Amos. "I do not believe he is in any worse condition financially than many others," she observed in December 1928. But several months later, as he embarked on a local business venture, Bessie remarked that "if Amos does not come out all right, I feel it will be for some wise purpose—that God is testing him—like He did *Job*."[9] Unlike her more worldly sons, religion never ceased to be the means and measure for all of Bessie's encounters in life. She never escaped the spiritual embrace of her Southern culture.

Tommy's cousin, Katherine Tift, sought release for her energies outside Georgia and, much like her father Orville, even on the seas. After growing up in Tifton, she married Frederick Jones, moved to Lumberville, Pennsylvania, and had three Yankee offspring. But she did not forsake her Southern roots. Katherine became an entertainer in the early days of radio

and used her Georgia heritage as subject matter for most of her presentations. Her impersonations of a white lady, "Miss Katherine," and her lovable old mammy servant, "Calliope," were so convincing that some listeners believed they were real. In 1922 she first broadcast from WEAF in New York and later worked for NBC and made guest appearances on the Bamberger Hour and the Eddie Cantor Show. She was then sent to Europe by R. H. Macy to do transatlantic commercial broadcasts from London, Paris, and Berlin. Thereafter she became a frequent international traveler, performing her Southern routine on Cunard vessels and utilizing her (Mallory) family's steamship line to visit other countries, including Italy, Greece, Algeria, and China.[10]

As a diseuse and raconteuse, Katherine performed in recitals in small towns in the Northeast as well as major concert halls. Typically her program combined modern poetry and folklore of the Old South. "A Glimpse of the Old South" was the billing for her 1925 appearance at the Barbizon-Plaza Concert Hall in New York City. In 1924 the *Brooklyn Daily Times* reported that she appeared "first in a Grecian robe of white, and then in a very definitely old-fashioned gown of the full raffled crinoline type." She began her recitation with verses by a local poet, then to soft music, such modern poets as Amy Lowell and Edna St. Vincent Millay. "When in her old gown of slave days, she told negro story after story of the Georgian plantations and house servants, nearly all humorous, she gripped her audience as it is not often possible to do." In a presentation to the Woman's Club at the Pythian temple in Brockton, Massachusetts, a large audience "listened, laughed and marveled" as she took them on a

> journey "back through the years," she introduced her old home in Georgia and the scenes of her girlhood, introducing "Mammy" and "Gussie," "Uncle Pete" and "Uncle Dan," to whom she was the "Little Missy" of the household. She gave her audience a delightful glimpse into the real character of these loyal followers of "the big house," and told stories and recounted incidents in the rolling, mellow tones and dialect of the southern negro, illustrating their faithfulness and delicious touch of humor.[11]

At the state teachers college in Oneonta, New York, Katherine enthralled her listeners with tales of "darkies, with all their delicious whimsical humor, their quaint customs and their peculiar superstitions." They responded with "overflowing laughter which bubbled spontaneously at

every quaint story of old days on the Georgia plantation and by the hush at every pathetic incident." Of the stories she shared with a women's club in New Bedford, Massachusetts, was one about

> Old Uncle Pete who had saved the family silver during the Civil War by hiding it in a place in the negro quarters where no Northern soldier would ever have suspected its presence; only a few years ago Pete wriggled away from an urgent request by his master to tell the story of hiding the silver to a gentleman from Boston. "Laws-a-mercy, Marster," Pete explained afterward. "Yoh never can tell when them soldiers'll be comin' this way again, and that's the best place on the whole plantation to hide things. I wa'n't taking no chances."
>
> There was the time Gussie asked "Mis' Liza" to get off from work a week from the next Thursday, to go to a funeral, Mis' Liza remonstrated with Gussie for being untruthful, since no funerals were planned ten days in advance. "I sho' is tellin' the truth," Gussie defended herself. "They ain't no doubt 'bout dis funeral. He's going to be hanged." [12]

Most evident from Tift-Jones's manner on this and other occasions was the patronizing affection she had for the other race in the South of her upbringing.

Much has been written on minstrelsy and its twentieth-century permutations. David Blight observes that this mimicry served to satisfy "emotional needs among whites." It was so appealing to audiences, according to Nathan Huggins, because of their ingrained "view of the Negro that was comic and pathetic."[13] Eric Lott agrees that it "coupled a nearly insupportable fascination and a self-protective derision with respect to black people and their cultural practices." A harsher view of the medium is conveyed in Marlon Riggs's 1987 documentary on *Ethnic Notions.* "Mammy, Sambo, Pickanniny, Coon, Uncle: The great-grandparents of many modern images of Blacks. These caricatures did as much harm as any lynch mob. True, their hurt was often indirect. Yet...they left wounds that have proved far more difficult to heal." Contrary to how such performances would later be viewed, however, minstrelsy and the kind of portrayals of blacks conveyed by Tift-Jones facilitated, according to Eric Lott, "an exchange of energies between two otherwise rigidly bounded and policed cultures," which moderated racial tensions in the 1920s.[14] Repeated encores and receptions following her program indicated that Yankee audiences shared Katherine's perspective on the black culture. Appearances at the Waldorf

Astoria, the White House, and the London Palladium highlighted her career. She had a rich life but inherited none of the Mallory or Tift fortunes and "ended up with nothing," according to Tee Porter, whose father provided support for her in later life.[15] Eventually Tift-Jones returned to Tifton after her husband's death, but it was her Northern experience as a Yankee retransplant that enabled her to reflect on her Southern upbringing and construct a successful career steeped in nostalgia.

Her cousin, Carolyn Beebe, also a talented performer, prospered by staying in the North. Born and raised in Westfield, New Jersey, where her father Silas was a provision dealer, she became a renowned concert pianist and director of Beebe Music Studios in New York City. In 1915 she founded the New York Chamber Music Society, an ensemble that included a piano, five stringed instruments, four woodwinds, and a French horn. Carolyn stayed in touch with her Southern kin by occasional performances in the region. When her ensemble visited Atlanta's Capital City Club in 1920, the *Constitution* called it "one of the best and most discussed musical groups now before the public" and credited Beebe for "doing more for music in America of any woman now living." An even firmer family bond was made possible through Carolyn's seasonal presence, along with her mother Helen (fourth child of Amos Chapman and Phebe) and sister at the Tift homestead in Mystic. For two generations it had served as a Northern playground where Georgia Tifts, led by Henry Harding, could escape the August heat. Soon after Bessie's death, Tommy bought the property, but it was managed in the summer months by the Beebes, who used it to escape the stresses of big-city life.[16] With continued annual visits by their Georgia cousins, it also provided a base for interregional dialogue.

Although Maurice Wheeler Tift, patriarch of his generation of the Albany branch, professed interest in his roots and wanted to stay in touch with his Tifton kin, he remained totally attached to his hometown.[17] It may have resulted from a childhood illness when his father, then partnered with Henry in Tifton, had to pole push a railroad handcar with two others to seek medical care for him in Albany. This incident was at least a factor in Nelson Franklin's permanent relocation. And Maurice later told his nephew, Robert Hall Tift, that he "swore he would never live in Tifton."[18] Another factor was his 2,276-acre farm which, according to his adopted grandson, David Sherman

> was primarily a cotton plantation until the Great Depression, when that crop was...abandoned because of the boll weevil. ...On an average the farm raised about 300 head of cattle and 200 hogs. It planted about 300 acres of corn, raised about 100 acres of oats for grazing and feed stock, had a 25 acre grove of Tung Oil trees, the nuts from which were sold for paint bases, and planted about 300 acres of peanuts each year. Each year it produced between 15,000 and 20,000 gallons of pure Georgia cane syrup, which was marketed by Tift Grocery Company under the name of Golden Drip Syrup. For most of its history mules were used for plowing, and about 30 mules and horses were kept on the place at all times.

There were many buildings on the Tift farm, including several large barns, a syrup house, blacksmith shop, commissary, weighing house, a pigeon house, a windmill for pumping water, a building that supplied power from a Delco electric system, and numerous dwellings for families of black workers who toiled on the land. The overseer's house was the only building that was painted and had running water, and his office, where accounts were settled, was across the road. Work hours were sunup to sundown with Saturday afternoons and Sundays off. With the advent of tractors in the late 1940s, farmhands and their families drifted off the farm, moving to towns or the North.[19] Maurice and Lula lived in the urban dwelling he built on Tift Avenue and were members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. With a proud family heritage, extensive economic interests, and social standing, the Tifts were pillars of the community for most of the century.

This reputation, however, stemmed not so much from Maurice's success as a businessman or agriculturist but from his contributions to the community. As mayor, he worked closely with the chamber of commerce to improve the business climate. In January 1919 a young veteran named Bob McCormack got off the train and walked over to Maurice's grocery and introduced himself. According to the company history,

> Tift asked Bob what he was doing in Albany and McCormack replied, "Looking for a place to start a candy operation." Tift took him to the Chamber of Commerce to meet executive secretary, John Mock. They then went to the Crystal Café and ran into grocer F. A. (Fleetie) Wallace who had a wholesale grocery and produce company. ...Wallace had no idea what McCormack was interested in, but when Mock asked him "What does Albany need most?" Wallace answered immediately, "Someone to make

candy." That clinched it. Albany would be the home of Bob McCormack's enterprise.

Albany proved a perfect match. Over the next seven decades Bob's Candies became the city's largest employer and the world's largest maker of stick candy and candy canes. "Dad just worshipped Maurice Tift," recalls Bob's daughter Bee.[20] But Maurice's two terms as mayor during World War I seemed only the beginning of a public service career that lasted for the rest of his long life. His father had been a county commissioner for eighteen years. When Nelson Franklin died in 1927, Maurice succeeded him for the next thirty-two years, including thirty years as chairman. He also chaired the Dougherty County Board of Roads and Revenues. In 1933 he headed the Georgia Association of County Commissioners, and in 1943 Governor Ellis Arnall chose him to serve on the state highway board, a first for Albany. He was also a board member for the Albany Exchange National Bank and the Citizens Southern Bank, president of the Rotary Club, chairman of the county Board of Health, member of the Board of Education, director of the Chamber of Commerce, county chairman for the sale of United States bonds in World War II, and the only non-Mason trustee of the Scottish Rite Hospital Board in Atlanta.[21]

One might suspect that such a dominant political figure might be tempted to use his position for personal gain, but there was never a hint of scandal or impropriety associated with his tenure in public service. David Sherman calls Maurice "a man of strong convictions and strong will, earning strong friends and making strong enemies." A lifelong Democrat and a fiscal conservative, he was "scrupulously honest; never taking advantage of information he had gained only because of his position." David's stepbrother agrees that "grand-daddy was as honest as the day is long."[22] Likewise Maurice exhibited the same degree of propriety and respect for others in his personal relationships. According to David, he "looked out for his brothers and sisters" who "always came to him when they had a problem," most often financial in nature.

Granddaddy didn't talk much about others, didn't gossip, was low key and quiet (but firm) in speaking (I never recall ever hearing him shout), kept his own counsel on personal matters, was not ostentatious, held strong and firm beliefs but respected the beliefs of others, lived simply at home, was frugal, very rarely showed emotions (nor did any man up until the last generation or

> so that I knew in the South), loved local and state politics, enjoyed farming, and never, ever bragged on himself. But "warm and fuzzy" he was not, at least to me. His first love after his wife died [1944] was Dougherty County and only secondly his business interests.[23]

In many respects he was not unlike his cousin in Tifton, Henry Harding Tift. According to John Sherman, part-inheritor of his estate, "we still have lots of uncancelled notes from all over Albany that grand-daddy never collected on."[24] Perhaps, taking a larger view, Maurice's altruism should not be surprising. After all, he had money, status, a loving family, and a long and fulfilling career of public service.

His life, however, was not devoid of tragedy. Maurice first experienced the loss of a son at age two in 1893, but he had two other sons. Asa, the elder, enlisted in the Navy at the outset of World War I. It was risky business. He reported home in May 1918 that he served as helmsman in a convoy of twenty-three vessels that sailed from New York to England. His ship carried a cargo of 108 Packard trucks and foodstuffs valued at four million dollars. On entering the English Channel his convoy was attacked by U-boats. "Dad, you know how wild I used to be about football. Well, I am afraid mere games will bore me if I witness a few more real scraps like this." He first saw a large British freighter being sunk, followed by the arrival of torpedo boats and sub-chasers.

> There were three U-boats in this engagement, and after the first torpedo was fired they all popped up to get a range, and were immediately sighted and greeted with such a hail of steel that they sank in a flash. All merchant ships are armed fore and aft. The little destroyers and torpedo boats jumped right into the thick of things, dashing over the place the subs were last seen, dropping depth bombs. A depth bomb is the same shape and about the size of a 100-pound lard can, and from the concussion they make they must be full of dynamite. Bombs dropped half a mile away made an awful racket in the hold of our ship.
>
> These maneuvers were repeated at intervals for almost two hours, every time a periscope was sighted. Two of the Allies' airplanes came during the engagement and added to the din. Finally one of the U-boats came up almost under the bow of a destroyer and was handed a visiting card with U.S.N. written on it in the form of a depth bomb. ...Dad, I am unable to describe my sensations during that little scrap. ...I was excited, of course, but I had to control myself. I was steering a ship. The sight made me boil with rage, and

> before the thing was over I had learned to hate. I have begun to enjoy the game of whipping Germany.[25]

Even when not in combat, danger lurked. On a return journey on the *USS Manhattan* near the end of the war, he spotted a mine. A dozen feet away, it went the length of the ship amidst waves tossing it around, he told his father. "All we could do was watch it and calculate on our chances of having part of our ship blown away. ...I thought it would never pass by." His ship also just missed hitting another vessel off Sandy Hook. "Only prompt action on the part of our badly scared captain averted this wreck." After such death-defying experiences, Asa and his parents could feel fortunate that the most serious injury he received from the Great War was a broken tooth from shipboard boxing.[26]

On returning home he entered his father's business, married Vera Inman of North Carolina, and had a child named Asa. But his taste for adventure and outdoor life continued. He and his younger brother William were expert swimmers and their curiosity led them to launch a canoe on Lake Worth near the Muckafoonee Creek dam on Saturday afternoon, 17 January 1925, when heavy rains had led to unprecedented flooding. The brothers decided to shoot the rapids formed by water passing over the dam. The water was so high that it appeared to be nearly equal on both sides of the dam as opposed to a normal drop of sixteen feet. While Asa watched on shore, Will ran the rapids. Unknown to them was a powerful hydraulic undertow that sucked Will's canoe under water. Asa then dived in to save his brother, but he too perished. It took several weeks to recover the bodies.[27] It was a terrible loss for the family and city. The *Albany Herald* reported that all day Sunday, "through rainy and cheerless hours, hardly a gathering...anywhere in the city failed to be marked by a discussion of the grim tragedy which had befallen not alone the Tift family, but the entire community."[28] Businessman Paul Keenan believes Maurice "never set foot in his [Episcopal] church again. He was devastated." Lula was "pretty much destroyed," recalls John Sherman, and went into depression. She spent a lot of time in her room alone and died two decades later at age seventy-four.[29]

Having lost all three of his sons, it is hardly surprising, notes David Sherman, that Maurice "remained a little distant from young people."[30] He coped with the tragedy by intensifying his involvement in civic affairs. But he also had several close calls with death. In December 1933 his car skidded

on wet pavement and went over a twelve-foot embankment near Jonesboro. He escaped with a fractured shoulder and Lula with broken ribs. More seriously, in 1952 his vehicle overturned three times on Leary Road west of Albany when a rear wheel came loose. The top of the car was crushed to the steering wheel and Maurice suffered head injuries, contusions, and multiple lacerations. He also had a major heart attack in 1942.[31] Yet he survived to his ninety-first year.

When he died in 1961, his real estate assets, excluding home and farm, were assessed at $199,200. Rents alone from over fifty properties enabled him to dedicate his life to public service.[32] Like his forebears, Maurice surely understood that the welfare of his city and county had a direct bearing on his business and personal well-being. Columnist H. T. McIntosh noted that "those still living in Albany who remember Colonel Tift agree that his grandson...is in many respects much like the venturesome founder of the settlement which was destined to become South Georgia's largest and most progressive city." He had "inherited the Tift faith in Albany and Southwest Georgia." His cousin Maria (Ria) Jones, who shared a "high ball" with Maurice during a visit from New York in 1950, was impressed. "Albany has surely become a city," she reported to Carolyn Beebe, "even to night clubs—some with dimmed lights & negroes singing—others with floor shows and dancing, and houses are spreading out in all directions." To his eighty-six-year old cousin Jerry Holmes in Mystic, Maurice expressed pride in his forefathers' legacy. "All of us who are living think it would be wonderful if my grandfather, Nelson Tift, and my father, Nelson F. Tift, could know of this splendid growth of the City that they built and lived in. ...we have a wonderful people in the City of Albany."[33] So entrenched was Maurice in his community that there was no doubt about his identity or desire to be anywhere else, least of all New England.

His cousin Tommy Tift, who also lived into his nineties, was never so civic-minded or secure about his status or place in life. Unlike Maurice, Tommy was not content to be a big fish in a small pond. With his Yale degree, socially ambitious wife, and Atlanta business interests, Tommy was reaching to a higher level. Yet he was always living in the shadow of his father. He was a "late bloomer," according to his son. "His problem was that he spent his whole life trying to have something of his own. He didn't work well with other people. He had to be a one man show. Grandfather always had partners. Father had to be in control." That he was also hearing impaired

only increased his tendency to focus on himself and not listen to others. A sign of his insecurity was the pride he repeatedly expressed in his Yale education. Little wonder that his manner often annoyed others in his family. It was displayed in part by a masculine demeanor. "Uncle Tommy was a malicious vicious cusser," according to his nephew, Amos Tift III. "His favorite was G-D." June Boyette, his secretary for nineteen years, confirms that he was boisterous, liked to "raise Cain," and used foul language at first. But after she threatened to wash his mouth out with Octagon soap, he stopped swearing, at least around her. Tommy was also a womanizer, "always pinching women's butts." Amos's wife Serita vouches, "I know from experience!" He found his niche in a man's world as a "sharp businessman" who was "tight as a tick with the dollar," recalls Amos. He talked stocks "all the time," but Tommy was also generous in dispensing market advice to others.[34] Mike Brumby, another nephew, recalls that if Tommy did not know you, he would talk through his nose. He also liked to pull out his stock report, query others about stocks, and brag about his portfolio. As a sign of conspicuous consumption, he bought a new Cadillac each year—fifty in all, according to Brumby. "We all ran and hid when he came. We didn't want to hear the same old stories. We called Uncle Tommy a business man's business man." His daughter Catherine concurs that he was tough-minded. "He loved to sue people and knew some law, probably from Yale." He even sued his brother Amos.[35]

How successful he was is questionable. Despite its proximity to cotton fields, labor, and the railroad, the family's East Point mill was hardly ever profitable after Henry's death. In the 1930s Tommy's daughter remembers "late suppers when we sat around the dining room table and discussed the ups and downs of the Piedmont Cotton Mill—mostly downs." Her father "never made money out of the mill, but he stayed at home till eleven or twelve in the morning on the telephone buying and selling cotton—speculating." Some of his purchases he used in the mill, others he sold. Tommy was also a "hands on" entrepreneur. "There was no machine, according to his son-in-law, that he hadn't been under or inside of or adjusted or fixed or taken apart. Sometimes he would do it in his Sunday best suit."[36] Only during the war did the mill prosper, making heavy (duck) canvas for tents, sails, and covers for jeeps, trucks, guns, and hatches. In July 1943 Tommy's plant received the "E" (for excellence) award by the Army and Navy for exceptional contributions to the war effort. At its peak it

employed 750 workers in 100% war work. Preston Arkwright, President of Georgia Power, proudly recognized it as "a Georgia mill, founded by Georgians, owned by Georgians, operated by Georgians, manned by Georgians, and converting a product of Georgia soil into war material." At war's end, however, the plant returned to its unprofitable state. Where "father made his money," according to Tommy, Jr., was "from selling family lands." At the time of his death he was worth about five million dollars.[37]

But there was a more tender side to the hardheaded businessman that his daughter recollects. "My mother never told me she loved me, even on her death bed, but I always knew and felt my father's love." Despite his womanizing, Tommy's wife "always adored him," but she never expressed her affection openly. "She loved him as much as she was capable of loving anyone. It was just her Victorian way—not to show emotions. He, on the other hand, was emotional and sensitive." It was evident when his children expressed an interest in socialism during their youth. "I was full of idealism when I was in college," recalls Catherine. "I took a lot of history and picked up all those liberal ideas and was at odds with my father. I thought socialism and labor unions and FDR were great, and Marx was prominent in my thinking. I couldn't understand why father didn't pay his workers more." Eventually both children reached a reconciliation with their family's capitalist heritage as they became involved in his businesses. Tommy, Jr. cites a quote by French statesman Aristide Briand: "The man who is not a socialist at twenty has no heart, but if he is still a socialist at forty he has no head."[38] Though not involved in public service like his father, Tommy Sr. could be charitable, as with his support of Katherine Tift-Jones and brother Amos, and generous, as when he donated a grand piano in memory of Carolyn Tift Beebe to ABAC in 1974, thus recognizing his connections to both Northern and Southern branches of his family.[39]

Despite his somewhat austere manner around relatives or business associates, he always exhibited a respectful, almost gentle, demeanor around blacks. Of the many he employed over the years, G. C. Kelly, his driver, and "Doc," his handyman, were his most trusted. June Boyette recalls once when Tommy's nephew David Tift died in New Orleans, he called on his two assistants to "go get him, set him up in the back seat, and bring him back to Georgia for burial." On hearing of this macabre assignment, "Kelly and Doc temporarily disappeared." But he was "always good to them and never used the 'n' word." His treatment of blacks was not unlike his treatment of

whites—paternalistic. "He was a father. I think Mr. Tift was a fair and just man," is Boyette's view. "Some were jealous of him, some were resentful, some appreciated him, and some in-laws just didn't like him. But he loved his family and managed to prosper, and not all of them did that. They all sort of fed off the first Tifts."[40]

What Tommy's two children vividly recollect were their family trips, especially to Mystic each August. "Sometimes we would have a clam bake on the beach," recalls Tee, "something I knew nothing about. These people were wonderful, but they had different accents and thought differently than we did." She would mimic their accents, but it soon wore off on returning home. Another kind of cultural divide was evident in her father's love for South Georgia. While his wife preferred cosmopolitan Atlanta, Tommy took every opportunity to escape to Tifton where life was less hectic and he could be natural. He loved to hunt on family lands and had fifteen bird dogs. "None of them were any good," recalls Tommy, Jr., "but he loved dogs and loved Tifton where he could be a big fish. In Atlanta he was just another fish. He wasn't comfortable if he wasn't the king pin." In Atlanta "father was a party guy, but with his hunting buddies he was a good old boy—a South Georgia party type." Until 1936 these trips coincided with visits to his mother to whom he was devoted. "Father was not religious," Catherine notes. "He only went to church for funerals and weddings. Same with his brothers. He rebelled against Bessie's religiosity." But he had read the *Bible* because of her and could quote chapter and verse. This religious nurturing was evident on Bessie's death in 1936. "Doesn't she look peaceful and beautiful," he observed while standing beside his mother's casket at her wake in the Tifton family home. "This is what she has been living for." In other words, she was just passing through this world temporarily. Thereafter he began saying grace at family meals. With Bessie's death and the purchase of a large seaside dwelling in Ponte Vedra, near Jacksonville, the pilgrimages to Mystic became shorter and less frequent. Florida was more accessible, warmer, and Southern![41]

No less devoted to his family's mixed heritage was Tommy, Jr., though he lacked the abrasive edge of his father. Both he and his sister were raised in the "blue blood" Ansley district of Atlanta, educated in private schools, and

received degrees from the United States Naval Academy and Sweet Briar College respectively. After a stint in the Navy, Tommy joined his father's company, and soon became director of operations. "When I went to work at the Mill in 1954," he recalls,

> we were still running spinning frames built by the H & B Machinery Company in England, in 1898, with the date molded thereon. Large coal fired boilers powered the machines turning long shafts attached to the flat roof, the entire length of the Mill building. Multiple flat belts drove each machine below. This system was basically developed during the Industrial Revolution and didn't change much until after World War II.[42]

Owing to antiquated machinery and a declining textile industry, Piedmont Cotton Mill was in "bad shape," losing about $300,000 a year. But in the next two years it was showing a profit margin, and Tommy thought he was "the smartest guy in the world." This success was illusory, buoyed by an upturn in the economy. With the recession of the late 1950s and the onset of foreign competition in the 1960s, the business foundered. By 1970 it was the only surviving mill of a once flourishing Atlanta industry. What convinced him to close the operation was a consulting trip to Brazil where he visited twenty-two plants and came to grips with reality—that his company, now down to a couple hundred workers making $2.75 an hour, could not compete with a foreign workforce making 55 cents. Also, it would cost $3 million to upgrade his equipment to make his operation competitive, and further pay raises would be necessary to avoid losing good employees to the nearby unionized Ford Motor Company assembly plant. At one point he was offered $135,000 by J. P. Stevens Textiles for the Piedmont plant, but Tommy felt strongly about keeping the business and land that his grandfather had acquired.[43]

Fortunately the eighty acres of Tift land was situated within minutes of two major transportation arteries—the Hartsfield International Airport (second largest in the country) and Interstates 75 and 85—and the former was moving all non-airline operations off its grounds. Displaying the same insightful spirit as his New England forefathers, Tommy, Jr. converted the cotton mill into an air freight depot. "We are helping the Airport, and they are helping us," was his attitude. He was also able to find jobs for all his employees at other Southside businesses. "We paid all our debts, filled all our orders." He then liquidated the mill machinery, entered into partnership

with a Brazilian firm to import yarn on a 50-50 basis, and moved the family carpet mill from Tifton to Cartersville where it was given to Catherine's husband James and renamed Porter Carpet Mills. Like his grandfather, he was a workaholic, working as much as sixteen hours a day, even on weekends. "I take things pretty serious business wise," Tommy admits.[44] By 1976 the Atlanta Air Center, with fourteen freight forwarders, customhouse brokers, and other airport-related businesses, located in 420,000 square feet of space in eleven buildings, was the largest private off-site air freight service in the nation. By 1983 it was serving such corporations as Emery Worldwide, Dollar Rent a Car, and Marriott In-Flite Service and making a profit. Tommy also formed Tiftonia Corporation to market real estate in Atlanta, Tifton, and Ponte Vedra. Although Piedmont Cotton Mill no longer manufactures cotton fabric, it remains the name for the operation that rents space to firms needing easy access to the Atlanta airport. Tommy "was anxious to keep the old name and keep it in the family."[45]

Further to reinforce family ties, he purchased, with yearly "loans" of $10,000 from his father, the Mystic homestead in the mid-1950s. During his years as mill director, he would spend a month in New York marketing textiles and continuing the family habit of sailing at Mystic. In the remaining months he rented the house to a local shipyard owner who eventually purchased it when sale of the mill precluded Tommy's trips to the North. Then Tommy indulged his passion for sailing on visits to Ponte Vedra. Although this generation of Tifts gradually lost touch with its Northern kin, loyalty to family traditions remained a hallmark of Tommy's existence. His sister notes that Tommy, like his father, "rarely stays at one house more than three or four days." He loves to travel to South Georgia, where he and his sister engage in real estate transactions, and to Florida, where he sails and meets his second wife, Ann Bentley, also a real estate broker. Tommy also shares his grandfather's penchant for public service, though hardly to the same extent. He became active in the Young Presidents Association for aspiring executives, vice chairman of the Pace Academy board in Atlanta, and chairman of the Tift College board just before it merged with Mercer University.[46] Like so many Tifts, Tommy's education was a driving force behind his business aspirations.

Such qualities were less operative, however, in the fate of Virginia (Presh), daughter of Henry, Jr. and Virginia Pound Tift. Much like Henry Tift Sr., her maternal grandfather, Jerome Balaam Pound, was a self-made

man. In addition to founding the *Macon Evening News*, the *Chattanooga News*, and the *Memphis Morning News*, he published a farm weekly, a Baptist newspaper, and a business magazine, and with the advent of radio created broadcasting outlets in Chattanooga, Savannah, Columbia, and Greensboro. The Hotel Patten, which he developed in 1908 in Chattanooga, became the basis for a far-flung real estate empire that included two more hotels in Chattanooga (Plaza and Eastern), four in Savannah (De Soto, De Soto Beach, Savannah, and General Oglethorpe), the Seminole Hotel in Jacksonville, the Ansley in Atlanta, and the Henry Watterson in Louisville, making him one of the largest prechain hoteliers in the country. He also built many office buildings in Chattanooga, including the Pound Building (the city's tallest structure), the post office, the city hall, and the old Schubert Theater, as well as a sixteen-story office building in Savannah. He owned many tracts of land, including fourteen hundred acres on Route 41 (west of Chattanooga) that were later developed by T. W. Tift into a settlement called Tiftonia. Pound was also instrumental in developing Lookout Mountain, just outside (or above!) Chattanooga, where he built his home and served as mayor for sixteen years. Although he did not succeed in convincing Calvin Coolidge to create a summer White House there, he entertained many national notables, including the playful Herman "Babe" Ruth who used his homerun hitting skills to drive a golf ball from the cliffs. Despite his Yankee-like qualities, Pound was a true son of the South, and the marriage of his daughter to Henry, Jr. held manifold opportunities for the Tifts to assimilate further into the region's plutocracy.[47]

Their sudden and tragic deaths seemed an abrupt end to any such aspirations. But the Pound legacy continued through Southern marriage linkages by his grandchildren, Virginia and Henry Tift III. The grandfather and great uncle of Presh's husband, Richard Gray Brumby, founded the Brumby Chair Company in 1884 at Marietta. The business thrived and by the 1930s garnered a national reputation for a porch chair called the "Brumby Rocker." Under Thomas Brumby, Jr. the company carried over 100 items, employed 350 workers, and had a total sales peak of $660,705 prior to World War II.[48] Thomas, Jr. was also civic-minded, having served as president of the Georgia Manufacturer's Association and five terms as mayor of Marietta. At the time of his death in 1938 the *Atlanta Journal* noted that when he took office the town was not only

> in debt, but its sinking fund also was depleted and its municipal services impaired. ...He wiped out the public debt, restored the public credit, improved every branch of the public service, including the school system, and at the same time reduced taxes and cut down the light and water rates. Rarely in Georgia or the South has there been another such example of governmental progress moving side by side with governmental economy.

Presh recalls that she met his son Richard on a blind date in Marietta on the way back to UGA during her senior year. Following their marriage at Chattanooga in 1937, the Brumbys lived in Marietta across from the chair company.[49]

Even more consequential to Tift placement in Southern society was the marriage of Thomas Brumby, Jr. in 1905 to Cordelia Inman Gray, scion of what was arguably Atlanta's most influential family in the New South era. Her maternal grandfather, Walker Inman, an astute businessman in his own right, was the uncle of cotton and railroad baron Samuel M. Inman, often called the "First Citizen of Atlanta."[50] Cordelia's father, James R. Gray, was born at Adairsville in 1859, practiced law in Atlanta for two decades, and in 1900 became editor and general manager of the *Atlanta Journal.* In 1905 the grandfather of Presh's husband purchased a controlling interest in the paper for $300,000. As a self-made journalist he increased its circulation and quality to make it one of the South's leading dailies. Through his editorials, Gray helped abolish the state's convict lease system and lower freight rates. He promoted urban growth, opposed corporate corruption, and endorsed public utility ownership. And like other "reformers," Gray opposed black political participation. As an influential voice in the Democratic Party, he helped secure the election of Governor Hoke Smith in 1906 and the adoption of his platform. He was also instrumental in raising $250,000 to establish Oglethorpe University in Atlanta.[51] Under his direction the *Journal* made many innovations, some of which were regional firsts, including a women's page, the dispatch of war correspondents, a sports section, a Sunday edition, and the South's first Sunday magazine. When Gray died in 1919 his sons, Inman and James, Jr., assumed the helm, and the *Journal* became the second newspaper in the nation to open a broadcasting station, WSB, "The Voice of the South," which went on the air (with 100 watts!) in 1922. In 1939 the Gray brothers sold the paper to former governor of Ohio and Democratic presidential candidate, James M. Cox for $3,156,350.[52]

How much young Virginia was influenced by the Pounds, Brumbys, Grays, Inmans, and Tifts is difficult to ascertain. She was, of course, born in Tifton and spent her childhood there. But she vividly recalls going to Mystic every summer. They were "happy times," but she was often bored by the long trip. "I used to read my eyes out while riding in the car up to Mystic." Later she spent summers with her late mother's family at Lookout Mountain, and winters with her grandmother Bessie in Tifton. One of her closest contacts while growing up was her younger cousin Lutrelle (Weetie), the daughter of Amos. But they did not always get along. When boys started visiting, Weetie recalls, "Presh told them I was too young, though they were interested. Once, when Presh needed a dress at Lerners for the Junior-Senior Prom, I found a beautiful one that I wanted. Mother bought it for Presh and I cried all the way home." As an adult, Virginia's contacts remained mostly Southern. She graduated from UGA, married a wealthy Southerner, spent most of her life in Tifton and Atlanta, and built a country home at Big Canoe in North Georgia when her husband died.[53]

Good fortune also awaited Lutrelle. After graduating from UGA in 1940 with a journalism degree, she edited a weekly newspaper on St. Simons Island where her parents had a second home. Soon after the outbreak of World War II, she met Joe Kennedy, Jr., who was stationed at the naval air station in Jacksonville, at the King and Prince Hotel on St. Simons. According to Weetie, they fell in love and, despite different religions, were discussing marriage. But Joe realized the dangers ahead and did not want her to become a widow. In 1944 he died when his plane went down over the English Channel. Though they dated for a year, she never knew that he was being groomed to be president. "He never mentioned that." In the meantime Weetie joined the *WAVES* and was stationed in Brooklyn as an aide to Naval Commandant Ernest King. The relationship with her future husband, Homer Meade Rankin, son of a prominent New Orleans cotton broker, emerged as a result of his being a tennis teammate of her cousin Buster at Harvard Military School in Los Angeles. They were married in 1944, but Rankin, an FBI agent, had to spend a year in South America running a spy station. Not only was he completely out of communication, but he suffered from poison ivy and contracted hepatitis so badly that he could eat nothing but vegetables and poached eggs for a year after returning. His experiences, she says, eventually formed the basis for an episode in the 1959 film, *The FBI Story*, starring Jimmy Stewart and Vera Miles.[54]

After the war Homer inherited $250,000 and engaged in various business ventures, including farming and plastics manufacturing, but the plant was struck by lightning and burned down. In 1952 he and his family pur-chased the Gazette Publishing Company, which enabled the Rankins to assume an influential role in civic affairs. As the *Tifton Gazette*'s managing editor, Weetie won the Georgia Press Association's Most Fearless Editorial Award twice. The Rankins supported a natural gas system for Tifton, a salary system for courthouse officers, a fully funded and staffed chamber of com-merce, school desegregation, and a popularly elected county commission chairman. Homer also served on the County Board of Education and the 1960 General Assembly Committee on Schools, known as the Sibley Committee, which paved the way for the desegregation of Georgia public schools. In the tradition of Weetie's grandfather and her father, Amos Tift, the Rankins contributed heavily to local institutions, including the hospital, ABAC, the library, and St. Anne's Episcopal Church. "There was never anything in Tifton that was worthwhile that we didn't support," was their attitude. What also gave the Rankins a stake in community life was a vast acreage Weetie inherited when her father died in 1956. From the vantage point of her spacious home on the lands of her forefathers, it is easy to understand why she insists that "land is the most valuable thing you can own."[55] Tift women, like their male counterparts, filled paternal roles, but they resulted less from entrepreneurial initiatives than through inheritance or the right marital choices. "I guess we just knew how to marry" is how Weetie's cousin Tee whimsically puts it.[56]

Arguably the most public-spirited in the sixth generation of the Tifton branch was Henry Harding Tift III. Having lost his mother when he was young, he was raised in his grandparents' house and shared a bedroom with his father. He "sowed his wild oats early," according to his daughter-in-law, and climbed the water tower in Tifton several times. After Henry, Jr.'s death in 1929, Buster was sent to school in Los Angeles. When he graduated in 1934, Bessie was pleased that he had matured into a "thoughtful, kind, considerate and pleasant" young man—"a perfect joy."[57] He graduated from Harvard University in 1938 (with Joe Kennedy, Jr. and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.) and Tulane Medical School in 1942. During the war he served in the medical division of the Army Air Corps. Henry's decision to settle in Macon

resulted from his marriage to Christine (Tinky) Cole Lee in 1940, whose father, Dr. William Green Lee, a descendant of the Confederate general, was a physician there. So resilient was his Southern heritage that Christine's son recalls that W. G. Lee often referred fondly to the general as "Uncle Bob Lee."[58]

Dr. Lee likely served as much a model for Henry III as his distinguished Tift grandfather, not only as a doctor but for his business and civic pursuits. Soon after settling in Macon, W. G. Lee realized that a doctor's income was insufficient and that he would need to pursue some more lucrative endeavors. One of them was livestock trading, which he carried out, according to his autobiography, upon settling his medical accounts late Saturday evenings. He would then walk over to the train depot and buy a ticket

> in the day coach to St. Louis, Missouri. I would make a pillow of my overcoat and sleep all night on it. Upon arriving Sunday morning I would get off the train and catch a street car for the stockyard in East St. Louis, buy two or three carloads of mules, catch the train that night and arrive in Macon Monday about noon. ...I bought many mules in Atlanta. At one time it was the largest mule center in the world and about $18,000,000 worth of mules were sold in a year. ...It was said by some of my friends and many of my competitors that I had one derby hat that sold a million dollars worth of mules. With a strong buck negro at the end of a halter and my rattling the above mentioned derby hat under the mule's belly, if any life was left in the animal he would go lunging and plunging skyward.

Mule prices, according to Stanford economist Gavin Wright, tripled between 1899 and 1918.[59] Lee's other business pursuits included a bank directorship (now SunTrust), an advertising agency, several farms, and real estate. Myrick Hilsman notes that Lee, with customary foresight, purchased considerable property in central Georgia, and by developing and improving it "came to practice the ideals of Rotary long before Rotary was ever established in Macon." Another account calls him a legend in his own lifetime, having survived four national depressions—1907, 1914, 1922, and 1930—"and never lost money on a single operation." Always active in civic affairs, he aided city fathers in constructing a city auditorium, a hotel, a stadium, and a park, and served on many boards, including the Mercer University Board of Trustees for twenty-four years. Lee was also largely responsible for the present layout of the Mercer campus and the development

of Shirley Hills subdivision across the Ocmulgee River from Macon.[60] On a site where two Confederate batteries stood during the Civil War, he and his wife Christine built a home in 1920, "Tranquilhil," where they and the next two generations of Lee/Tift descendants raised their families. When their sons, naval air cadets, crashed their plane during World War II, their son-in-law filled an important void in their lives. Though Southern to the core, the Lees recognized a special relationship to their Yankee kin with a mural of Mystic, Connecticut, that covered the entire dining room wall.[61]

As a physician, Henry III was not only dedicated to his patients but to the welfare of his community. "He was totally generous and humble, but not a weak person" is the view of his third son Jerry. Among other things, he served as chief of staff of Macon hospital, a member of the board and later president of Middle Georgia Hospital, president of the Bibb County Medical Society, a Georgia delegate to the American Medical Association, fundraising leader for the Bibb County Heart Council, deacon at the First Baptist Church, and president of the Macon Kiwanis Club, the Boys Club, and the Idle Hour Golf and Country Club.[62] Henry devoted his time and made donations not only to causes but to individuals. He distributed silver dollars to nurses at the hospital on Christmas. His goodwill was spontaneous, revealing an outlook almost childlike in simplicity. Buster did not like big cities, but when he had to go to New York for a medical conference, his wife would take him to the theater. Tinky recalls that "twice he had us leave before the play was over, and I couldn't believe it, because I would never leave, even if I didn't like the play. ...But he does like musicals." Henry was equally candid about politics, according to Jerry Tift. "He would see Ronald Reagan on TV and say, 'I like that man. I think I'll vote for him.'" He was apolitical and based his choice on personality. He would also go to buy a car and be prepared to pay sticker price, trusting the honesty of the salesman. Although he was devoted to his family, he rarely visited Mystic or even Tifton, preferring to spend two weeks a year at the Sea Island home where Tinky's family had always vacationed.[63]

A fitting counterpart to Henry Tift III on the Albany side of the sixth generation was David Mercer Sherman (Mercer), whose childhood also was complicated by the loss of both parents. It was probably for that reason, estimates Mercer's adopted son, David, that he had "an extremely strong sense of duty to 'Dad' [M. W. Tift] for all he had done...in adopting and raising him." Born in 1906, Mercer was active in high school as yearbook

editor and in football, basketball, track, and boxing, where he fought under the pseudonym of "Kid Sherman." Later, as a reporter for the *Albany Herald*, he interviewed flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker and Charlie Paddock, "world's fastest human." On entering UGA in 1924, Mercer played sports and majored in journalism but soon had to return to Albany to help the family recover from the loss of his stepbrothers. In 1927 he returned to school and helped produce an underground student newspaper, the *Iconoclast*, which attacked various university policies, especially the emphasis on athletics over academics. Mercer was expelled but was later reinstated under pressure from the state legislature along with four others.[64] He elected not to come back to school or even pursue a journalism career. On marriage in 1928 to Ernestine Walker, whose parents were neighbors of Maurice's mother in Oglethorpe, Mercer returned to Albany to become vice president of M. W. Tift Wholesale Grocery. "He felt after his brothers' deaths that he owed a debt to M.W.T. to try and step in and help fill the void with the business," observes David Sherman.[65]

In that capacity, and using his stepfather as a role model, Mercer indulged in a parallel career of public service. In 1926 he helped found the Albany Business Club and became its president. When it became the Albany Lions Club, Mercer served as president in 1930 and 1931 and remained active for the next sixty-five years. In 1988 he was named a Melvin Jones Fellow, the organization's highest honor. Until 1958 he assisted with the Lions sponsorship of the Albany Cardinals, a semi-pro farm team of the St. Louis club. In the 1930s he served several terms as director of the Albany YMCA and helped form the Albany Yacht Club on Lake Worth. During World War II he and Ernestine befriended numerous Royal Air Force cadets at Darr Aero Tech (Turner Field), according to David Sherman. They "practically lived at their house during time off, listening to classical records." Later Mercer and Ernestine sent packets of hard-to-get food items to their families in Britain. Also in the 1940s, Mercer was active in the Albany Little Theatre and president of the Men's Garden Club. As a member of the American Camellia Society, he raised thousands of camellias in his one-acre garden and exhibited them in regional shows. In the 1950s he served as vice president of the Georgia Wholesale Grocers Association and member of the Albany Tax Equalization Board.

> When zoning was a new and unpopular issue in Albany, he helped organize and served as Chairman of the old Albany-Dougherty County Planning Board, and was in December of 1960 elected Chairman of the City-County Planning Commission which took its place. For years in the 1970's he was a member of the Judicial Service Agency which worked with delinquent youths. In April of 1973 he became a member of the Central Albany Development Authority, and in 1974 was appointed by the Mayor and City Commission a member of the Albany Housing Authority, where he was elected Chairman in 1976 and served in that capacity for many years until he left that body in 1991. ...Sherman Oaks Housing Development was named for him.

Beginning in 1974, Mercer served many terms on the Democratic Executive Committee for Dougherty County, but resigned and, in keeping with regional trends, supported Republican candidates nationally and Democrats in local and state races.[66]

Until the firm closed in 1957, Mercer directed operations for Tift Wholesale Grocery and a Budweiser distributorship (Georgia Beverage Company), which supplied country stores, corner groceries, and rolling stores for such hamlets as Leesburg, Dawson, Blakeley, Doerun, Leary, Arlington, and Sycamore. He also managed his father's rental holdings from an office in the Sandy Bottom section of North Washington Street that had been in the family since Nelson's time. They included over fifty houses, duplexes, and apartments as well as a warehouse and commercial structures like the Black Cat Drive-In and the Boogie Woogie grocery and bar. One of the rental buildings near the railway station was called the First Chance-Last Chance Saloon, it being the first and last place to get a drink for travelers. Another one housed the Drinkwater Saloon, from the bartender's name. Mercer also managed Tift Farm until the property was sold in 1963 and 766 acres of timberland in Early County that he inherited from his own family. To his son, he was a "non-pretentious, frugal person of high integrity."[67] Though not a Tift, Mercer emulated his father and embodied the entrepreneurial traits of his adopted family.

Richard Ashe Tift, son of Samuel Hall Tift and Allatia Westbrook, was born in Albany in 1901 and also had an inclination for business. He grew up an only child, his three sisters and one brother having died in childhood,

mostly of diphtheria.[68] Unlike other Tifts who built on the success and fortunes of their forebears, Richard showed much the same originality, pioneering spirit, and willingness to take risks as such early Tifts as Amos, Nelson, and Henry. He also displayed a civic consciousness. Richard enrolled at Georgia Military College in Milledgeville at age fourteen and attended the Citadel during World War I. After graduating from UGA in 1924, he married Elizabeth Wooten McKenzie and soon headed his own real estate firm, the Richard Tift Company, in Albany. But his real love, according to his half-brother Robert, was hunting and fishing, which he acquired from his father. Richard's genius was to "turn a hobby into a livelihood."[69] His passion for quail hunting led to the acquaintance of Judge Robert Bingham, whose wealth was derived mostly from his marriage to the widow of Henry Morrison Flagler, one of the five founders of Standard Oil. Bingham owned a large tract of land in Baker County called Pineland.[70] This association led to two career advantages for Richard—a link to lands opened by his great-grandfather and close friendship with an important public figure.

Although the concept of game plantations, as winter resorts for prominent social, industrial, and financial figures, dates back to 1882 in the Thomasville-Tallahassee area, according to Robert Balfour, the plantations in the Albany area were "brought about largely by the efforts of one man." When Bingham died, after serving as ambassador to the Court of St. James during the first term of Franklin Roosevelt, Richard handled the sale of his plantation to Richard Mellon of Pittsburgh, one of the nation's richest men. He then secured 2,000 acres as a game preserve for legendary golfer, Bobby Jones, through whom he became a member of the Augusta National. But it was his assembling of a 35,000-acre plantation in Baker County for Coca-Cola chief Robert Woodruff in the mid-1930s that led to Richard's association with a vast array of notables, including such corporate executives as William C. Potter (Guaranty Trust), Alton Jones (Cities Service), James M. Hanes (Hanes Textiles), John Olin (Olin Matheson), and ultimately Governor Herman Talmadge, Vice President Richard Nixon, and President Dwight Eisenhower.[71]

Thus Southwest Georgia, one of the most rural and poor parts of the state, became a playground for the rich and famous on lands formerly devoted to cultivating cotton. Prior to 1936, Richard Tift operated alone, but building on his association with Bingham and Woodruff, he entered a partnership with two veteran land dealers, Herbert Stoddard of Thomasville,

a noted authority on game, timber, and soil values, and John Jenkins of Charleston, who specialized in the development of abandoned rice fields for duck hunting in South Carolina. The object of his firm was to guide inexperienced buyers and avoid needless expenditure of time and money. "Our policy," Richard explained to Woodruff, "will be to represent the buyer and not the seller of game lands," except for the "resale of going preserves." It applied mainly to undeveloped acreage and included selection, organization, and development of game preservation properties.[72] Although Richard sold some lands in South Carolina, he and Stoddard mainly assembled plantations around Albany, according to Lamar Clifton, former president of the chamber of commerce. "They were put together during the Depression when land was cheap. Plantations are a big deal around here and have contributed a lot to the ambiance and stability of Southwest Georgia." Harold (Huddy) Hudgens, a former aide to Richard, explains that "the rich used them as a tax write-off until the IRS made them start making a profit. But they came here mainly because they enjoyed hunting." It was a leisure lifestyle and escape from business pressures. Quail shooting took place from about 9:00 to 11:30 A.M. and from 2:00 to 4:30 P.M. "It was a social event."[73] Occasional field trials added a competitive element and some excitement. Richard helped organize some of the first ones in the 1920s. He not only made lots of money assembling plantations for the high and mighty but secured his own 1,300-acre spread, The Oaks, south of Albany where he too could indulge in this culture of polite rusticity. There he played with his rich neighbors and often served as overseer of their properties when they were away. It resulted in a lasting bond with Woodruff, whose spread at Ichauway has been dubbed "The Soul of Bob Woodruff."[74]

So successful was Richard in the sale, management, and preservation of rural properties that he restarted his own real estate company and secured an appointment in 1949 on the Georgia Game and Fish Commission. After a decade of service, he was recognized by the *Albany Herald* as the leading spirit on the eleven-man commission.

> When Mr. Tift first went on the commission, it had no biologists and the state hatcheries were of little use because rough fish were so prevalent in the streams where the fingerling bass and bream from the hatcheries were dumped that the young fish were of little, if any value for restocking purposes.

> Game management is another area in which the commission has made progress during Mr. Tift's tenure. Now 10-year contracts, with options for renewal for another 10 years are required on tracts leased for producing game. ...No hunting is allowed during the first five years, and after that managed hunts are held each year. ...Last year [1958] 621,152 hunting and fishing licenses were sold in Georgia, compared with only 227,414 before Mr. Tift became a member of the commission.

This program resulted in an increase in Georgia's deer population, and the establishment of a lespedeza nursery in Albany led to an increase in quail by propagating vegetation for their food and shelter. Public-shooting areas were also created, thereby relieving pressure on farmlands and attracting Northern shooters, each adding as much as $100 per day to the state's economy. In 1959 Governor Ernest Vandiver recognized Tift's service by naming him chairman of the commission. In that capacity he was instrumental in securing thousands of acres from the St. Joe Paper Co. in 1964 for the Chickasawhatchee Game Preserve, west of Albany, for managed deer hunts, and in 1968 he initiated and handled the negotiations to acquire Sapelo Island for a wildlife refuge from Mrs. R. J. Reynolds. He also secured the cooperation of the state's plantation owners for scientific studies of quail and other game, brought about the stocking of striped bass in Lake Seminole in 1964–1965, and was a driving force behind the commission's acquisition of the Okie Woods at Perry. During his tenure the commission came under the state merit system, the state's fish hatcheries were renovated, and game management lands increased from about 125,000 acres to over 500,000.[75] His service ended in 1970, however, owing likely to his decision to spend the summer at his retreat in Highlands, North Carolina, and take no active part in the gubernatorial campaign of Jimmy Carter. His zeal for public service was no doubt sincere, but it also owed much to his desire to perpetuate the social network he had created for his wealthy friends. "They enjoyed the lifestyle, and the only way they could continue to enjoy it was to preserve the environment" is the view of Huddy Hudgens.[76]

Richard and his friends, however, were hardly exclusivist in their environmental concerns. On learning of the widespread incidence of malaria in the late 1920s, Robert Woodruff provided free quinine for his plantation families. When it proved ineffective, he used his influence at Emory University to develop a malaria control program, utilizing a new synthetic drug, for all Baker County residents. According to Lee Formwalt,

Woodruff encouraged Emory University and the U.S. Public Health Service to establish a full-fledged field station at Ichauway to study malaria control and elimination of hookworm and pellagra. The field station, which closed in 1957, not only improved the quality of health in Baker County but served as a model for what eventually became the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

Woodruff also had a $1 million medical clinic built in Newton for county residents.[77] Vermin control, especially of wildcats and foxes, was another concern of Woodruff and his ilk, and Tift offered the services of experts at his commission to teach trapping techniques to plantation employees. But Woodruff was also sensitive to the region's ecological balance. "There has always been in my mind a question as to how far we should go with this activity," he confided to Richard Mellon, "as I do think it may be possible under certain conditions to get nature out of 'balance.' However, since all of these predators are generally recognized as doing damage to quail nests, eggs, or live birds, my feeling is that if we err it should be on the side of taking too many rather than too few."[78] On his death in 1985 he left Ichauway to the Woodruff Foundation, which set up the Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center for the study of forests, wetlands, and natural resource management. By 1996 the center's four buildings encompassed 40,000 square feet of laboratories, offices, a library, and a computer center. With ninety full-time scientists and laborers, it was the county's largest employer and taxpayer. "We have more Ph.D.s in Baker County on any given day than any other county in south Georgia," boasted County Commissioner Mike Tabb.[79] What made this development possible were the land utilization schemes orchestrated by Richard Tift.

Another example of the influence he exercised for private and public good was the creation of the South Dougherty Community Center. It arose from the need for a venue to stage field trials, replete with a clubhouse, stables, and kennels. After discussing the matter in 1958 with John Olin, Richard Mellon, Robert Woodruff, Alton Jones, and James Hanes, Richard donated twenty-eight acres and became a member of the fledgling center's board of trustees.[80] It was uncertain, however, how far his wealthy friends were willing to support him. Woodruff had "misgivings" and was reluctant to move without Mellon and Olin. Mellon, after studying the project, concluded that "it is a good thing for all concerned if it is properly managed.

I received this assurance from Tift after a long and serious conversation." Likewise Olin believed the center would be useful and serve the community well. Both contributed $5,000.[81] As the founders had hoped, the center held some of the finest field trials ever staged in the South, but it was also used for Christmas parties, weddings, reunions, retreats, workshops, and fundraising events by charitable groups, churches, civic clubs, and corporations.[82]

Further attempts to solicit the largesse of Georgia's richest man took the form of various civic projects. The donations of Woodruff and other plantation owners to the community center were in part self-serving, but his contribution to the recovery of Albany after a devastating tornado in 1940 was wholly altruistic.[83] Richard thanked him "not only from a personal standpoint but also on account of the feeling I have for Albany," Woodruff's contribution being "the indirect cause of a great many other donations, and it is one of the finest things I have ever known." Woodruff, of course, could not afford to cure the ills of the world, but Southwest Georgia had become his second home, and his introduction by Richard to the common people of the region gave him a personal reason to extend his generosity. Several years later, however, when asked to help the Albany Red Cross meet its $16,700 goal, Woodruff had to tell Richard that he had been overasked, having already contributed "in a quite substantial way" to funds in Baker County, Atlanta, and Wilmington, Delaware. Likewise, when Richard and Bobby Jones asked Woodruff to contribute to the "Citizens for Eisenhower Campaign" in 1956, they received a friendly rebuff. "I have grown accustomed through the years to being solicited for various projects," Woodruff replied, "but you fellows are overdoing it! I have had communications from six or seven people about the 'Citizens Campaign' and of course have made a contribution, so it looks like you will have to try to expand your mailing list."[84] These requests must be viewed against a larger backdrop of regular exchanges between Tift and Woodruff about land negotiations, upkeep of Ichauway, game welfare, field trials, and visiting arrangements.

It is not surprising that these financial and social contacts also led to political bonding. Although Woodruff and Tift, given the traditions of their state since antebellum times, were Democrats, the course of national politics and the increasing specter of socialism since the New Deal era was steering them towards the GOP. Especially when Dwight Eisenhower became president in 1952, the plantation owners became aware that Republicans

were the true friends of big business. It was in that spirit that Richard and Bobby Jones took the lead in soliciting support for Republican candidates, at least on the national level. In requesting "a substantial check," Richard assured Woodruff that "the foes of business never sleep. They are financed from funds that were never intended to be used for that purpose, but they are available and they are ample. Businessmen must fight with voluntary contributions, but fight we must or we may live to see free enterprise in America gone with the wind."[85] This political agenda coincided with occasional visits by Eisenhower to Georgia during the 1950s.

Woodruff hardly needed convincing to join the Republican bandwagon as he had already developed a personal friendship with Ike. In 1950, when Eisenhower was planning to play golf in Augusta, Woodruff invited him to come to Ichauway for a few days to shoot quail and wild turkey. Additionally he thought "you and I may have a little 'business' to talk about." It turned out to be a gala affair that included many local plantation owners as well as Ralph McGill of the *Atlanta Constitution*, James Gray of the *Albany Herald*, ventriloquist Edgar Bergen, and Richard Tift. Robert Balfour relates how Eisenhower and Bergen, who occupied adjoining stands, fired simultaneously as a huge gobbler darted between them. When the bird fell, both hunters hurried to it "only to learn that each of them had fired. Edgar Bergen picked up the old gobbler, tucked it under his arm and worked its bill as he asked, 'Mr. Turkey, who killed you?' The gobbler replied, 'You killed me, Bergen.' That settled it." It was a cold day in February, and when they returned to the lodge Eisenhower and McGill shared war stories. On leaving, Ike spoke fondly about the sparkling weather and tastiness of Southern barbecue.[86] Hunts staged by Richard were "medieval," recalls Tommy Malone, "just like royalty would have done it, with liveried servants holding guns and clearing covies." Hereafter there was more to attract the president to Georgia than golf, and in addition to Woodruff's place, his Secretary of the Treasury, George Humphrey, had a plantation at nearby Thomasville.[87] The piney woods enabled the president to relax and escape the stresses of high office.

Georgia politicians too found frequent refuge in the getaway Richard assembled. One of them was United States Senator Herman Talmadge, but Hudgens, who escorted many visitors on their hunts, recalls it was never a pleasure when Talmadge came to hunt. "He slaughtered birds. I dodged more gunshots from him than from anyone. You knew you were in trouble

if anyone referred to bullets rather than shells. Mr. Tift was a master at warding Talmadge off covies using his dogs. He liked being with those who enjoyed the sport." One weekend both the Republican president, Eisenhower, and the Democratic governor, Ernest Vandiver, came to shoot quail on adjoining plantations. The president, a guest of oil magnate Alton Jones on Blue Springs Plantation, and the governor, who was hosted by Tift at Pineland, later joined each other in a nonpartisan spirit on a "common cooking ground." On this occasion Richard and his friends nearly seduced the president into purchasing a plantation near Albany after he retired.[88] Although Eisenhower eventually settled at a farm near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, his visits were not without consequence. They encouraged donations from Woodruff and other plantation owners for his campaigns and presidential library and helped pave the way for Republicanism in Georgia and the Deep South, which later came to fruition during the era of Paul Coverdell.[89] Richard played a critical role in these machinations.

He was also generous. In 1989, when the community center lost its tax-exempt status, the owners withdrew their support. At the suggestion of Hudgens, it was donated to the Phoebe Foundation, a non-profit supporting unit of Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital. Richard Tift not only had a direct hand in this transfer, but he was instrumental in establishing Charity Fund #1 at the hospital, whereby any plantation resident who did not have insurance or sufficient funds would receive free medical treatment.[90] This benefit preceded medicare, and 99% of the recipients were black, notes Hudgens. "Richard was a most generous man." Like Henry Harding and M. W. Tift, he "loaned a lot of money, knowing it would never be paid back." Hudgens has boxes of his notes in his back room that are still owed. Richard always had new money from the bank. "When families and children came visiting, he would give them a nice fresh dollar bill. He always wanted to give people things to take home with them." He also donated four acres of land to the local Elks Lodge. Richard was a "Southern gentleman" who lived

> high on the hog and enjoyed the fineries of life. He took a nap every day in the early afternoon. He ate Southern food. He was not a loner by any means. It is hard to say that he was a hard worker. He used his mind all the time—it never shut down. I've seen him drink a fair amount of liquor, but he was always in control of himself. He was also an excellent card player and played a lot of gin rummy. He could count cards better than anybody. Mr. Tift was not arrogant but knew so many people—more people than you could ever

> believe. He knew how to make someone feel comfortable. He promised everybody everything all the time. If he thought that by promising you something he could get something from you, he would do so. He had a direction he wanted to go in most things.

Hudgens also insists that Tift "didn't have any traits of being a Yankee." Not so, insists Thomas Malone, whose father Rosser handled Richard's legal business. "He was an entrepreneur of the first order, a visionary, and bigger than Southwest Georgia. Richard was a patrician and different from mere mortals." Former Mayor Paul Keenan concurs that "he was outside of the usual orbit."[91] Indeed much of the entrepreneurial spirit and sense of direction he displayed were traits of other successful members of his family—Nelson, Henry Harding, Asa, Thomas Willingham, and Maurice Wheeler Tift—all of Northern origin, and virtually all of Richard's fellow plantation owners, his cultural kin, were Yankees. Even the grandfather of Bob Woodruff, George Waldo Woodruff, was a Connecticut Yankee.[92] No doubt his Northern pals were attracted by Richard's combination of a businesslike manner overlain with Southern charm.

Utilizing this social formula and business partnerships, Tift and Westbrook for real estate and Tift and Lanier for insurance, he made a fortune. Richard also invested heavily. He founded the Norsul Oil Company in South America that explored, drilled, and exported oil and owned a bus company in Albany. But market fluctuations could entail major losses, especially for a risktaker like Richard. "He made money fast," observes his half-brother Robert, "but lost it fast, and then made it back fast again." He also made some bad investments towards the end of his life. Hudgens concurs that he made lots of money selling expensive property, "but in later years he was land poor. Mr. Tift didn't have a steady income, and he also had a tax problem. It was better for him to borrow money against his assets and then pay it back." Eventually he had to sell his plantation to pay his debts. But he was "okay with it" says Hudgens. "There was a time and place for everything, and his friends enjoyed the place more than he did. He had been there and done it, and his friends were basically mooching off of him." When he died at age eighty-seven, he left a million-dollar estate, including valuable pictures and statues, but there was conflict over the settlement. He and his wife Elizabeth had no children, and her alcoholism (and occasional institutionalization) was probably abetted by his high-society cravings. She

hardly had a life of her own. Attorneys and accountants took most of the inheritance, and "Mrs. Tift's estate sued Mr. Tift's estate." John Sherman sued Richard's estate for promises made to him. "If I had gotten everything he had promised me," notes Hudgens, "I would have the whole estate." Similarly Robert Tift was supposed to get 40% and his sister 20% after Elizabeth's death, but after her husband's death "she lived a lavish lifestyle." When the estate was settled in 2003, he received only $35,000.[93] It was a sad legacy to a life marked by such exuberance.

Richard's cousin, Julia Jervey Smith, was the daughter of Irene Mercer Tift and Francis Weston Smith. Though born in Albany in 1926, her early life was affected by fortuitous events in South Carolina where her father had a cotton plantation near Greenwood. According to Julia's older sister, Aimee Hodges, he resembled Richard Tift.

> Father wanted to be a gentleman farmer. He enjoyed life and liked people. He also liked to go hunting and fishing. But cotton was his ruination. When the cotton failed he went broke. It was just after I was born [1917]. Mother came to Albany with me and my older sister, and daddy sold the land. The money was used to pay off debts in South Carolina. Daddy did inherit some money, but Mama spent it on curtains. She always bought the best of everything. Mama had a strong character and a sharp tongue.

The Smiths also inherited the back lot of the Tift homestead in Albany where the children grew up. When their father died, Richard sold the property for them, Irene moved to Milledgeville to live with Aimee, and Julia went to Sullins Academy, a boarding school in Bristol, Virginia.[94] Julia then attended the University of Alabama where she met her husband, John Percival Oliver of Wicksburg, Alabama, who was studying law. After their marriage in 1946, she finished her degree, taught school in Dadeville for a while and had four babies. Julia wanted to return to Albany and enter politics, but her husband refused to leave Alabama. So she became the wife of a local attorney, which included mainly cardplaying and gossip and "bored the hell out of me," Julia recalls.[95]

In 1954, during an era when women, especially in small towns, were expected to serve as homemakers and helpmetes, Julia broke the mold by becoming a county caseworker for the Department of Pensions and Security. She moved up to child welfare worker and in 1961 became human resources director for Tallapoosa County. After completing a master's degree in social

work from Florida State University (FSU), Julia was promoted in 1971 to assistant director on the state level where she wrote legislation and lobbied. When Ruben King resigned in 1974, Governor George Wallace made her Commissioner for the entire department. The *Dadeville Record* heralded the appointment as a triumph of good sense. "Mrs. Oliver takes on a job that, like many other 'important' jobs, is too often left to 'men', while lesser responsibilities are often left to more-than-competent women." With her appointment to such a "prestigious post" came a realization "that Mrs. Oliver's work is not for 'men', nor is it for 'women' but for the most competent person prepared to take on the demands of the office." The *Birmingham News* viewed it as "refreshing to have a person trained in the ways and byways of the complicated role" filling this position. The *Alexander City Outlook* regarded Julia, who came "up through the ranks," as "one of the most respected welfare workers we've ever known." It was a heavy responsibility, overseeing 4,000 employees and a yearly budget of $250 million that included food stamps, disabled and child protection services, and aid to dependent children for sixty-seven counties.[96] Julia was unique not only for holding a higher degree but for being the first female to hold a full cabinet position in state history.

This achievement may be attributed in part to the educational and leadership capacities that were part of her Tift heritage. "She faced all the inherent 'setbacks' along the way, never discouraging herself, just pushing ahead," observed her hometown paper. Her diligence earned a citation in 1974 from the Social Security Administration for transferring 130,000 aged, blind, or disabled Alabamians to supplemental federal coverage and by her 1975 election as president of the Alabama Conference of Social Work. As a sexist pundit reflected in a 1976 article on "The Lady Commissioner," "some good-looking blondes may well be dumb, but Julia Oliver is one who ain't."[97] But responsibility for Alabama's largest bureaucracy was almost totally hers. "George Wallace had no interest in running the state," Julia recalls. "He was only interested in politics." Much though she may have preferred to return to Albany, the most appealing aspect of her adopted state was its Southern culture. "I decided in college that I would never marry anyone from north of the Mason-Dixon line or a physician. I wanted companionship, not money. Not that Yankees couldn't give this. But it's a different world and mindset up there. Life has enough problems without having to cope with snow, ice, and sleet." Although Julia considers herself "a

liberal, even a flaming liberal, and a Democrat," she harbors strong antipathies towards the North and defends many attitudes of her conservative Southern kin. This strong sense of place and Southern identity can be traced to her accomplished forefathers. It gave her "great assurance" through life knowing she was "a direct descendant of the founder of Albany. I never had any problem knowing who I am."[98] Ironically, the object for her affinity to the South was a Connecticut Yankee, and she always had a sentimental attachment to Mystic.

Likewise, Nelson Tift Mitchell, another sixth-generation great-grandchild, expresses pride in being a descendant of Nelson Tift. His father, Nelson Tift Mitchell, Sr., son of the founder's second daughter Maria (Isabelle), was supposed to inherit "quite a bit of rental property" but was only a child when his parents died. Whether it was appropriated by others in the family, as Nelson, Jr. suspects, cannot be determined, but it became "a touchy subject." The elder Mitchell married Lulu Matthews and found employment with W. B. Haley, the Coca-Cola distributor in Albany. At the end of World War I he opened his own plant in Ocala, Florida, where Nelson, Jr. and his sister Frances were born. It was a time when Coke was still new, and the Mitchells could have made a fortune, but Nelson, Sr. sold his interest in the business, moved to Bradenton where he sold linens to hotels, and then back to Georgia where he died of kidney cancer in 1929. Soon after finishing high school in Albany, Nelson, Jr. married Marjorie Miller, a childhood friend. He then enlisted in the Navy and served as a gunner on merchant vessels in the North Atlantic. In November 1942, his convoy of thirty-two ships was attacked by a wolf pack of German U-boats. When a torpedo struck his vessel, the *Parismina*, a refrigerator ship owned by United Fruit Company, it sunk within five minutes. Nelson escaped in a lifeboat and was rescued by a British ship. But the exposure left him with pneumonia and an asthma condition that led to a medical discharge.[99]

Nelson recuperated in Brooklyn and returned home to work as manager for Colonial Stores, a regional retail chain, for the next twenty-five years. After retirement in 1969, he worked briefly for the post office and then spent seventeen years with the United States Department of Agriculture inspecting chickens in Camilla, hogs in Moultrie, and cows in Albany. While Nelson never reached the same degree of status and material success as some other Tifts, he showed much of the same resourcefulness and was a self-made man in his own way—eventually receiving several retirement incomes. He also

shares some of the cultural disaffections as Julia Oliver, particularly about the North and Northerners. "I know I wouldn't want to live up there," he says, "where you have to enjoy the nice weather while it lasts—about two months." He remembers Yankees from the war years, how "ugly they were in restaurants, same in Florida, where everyone was rude and in a hurry. Down here we're much kindler and gentler." Nelson can also talk endlessly about football, especially Georgia Bulldogs, and takes pride in having attended every Georgia-Florida game for decades. When asked whether he feels Southern, his wife erupted before he had a chance to respond, "Lord, do you have to ask?"[100]

By the sixth generation of Tifts, three removed from Nelson and two from Henry, it was obvious that virtually all family members were showing a strong loyalty and cultural affinity for the South. But some also displayed many quintessential Northern traits, in their stress on education as an engine of progress, business as a career (even in agriculture), a strong sense of morality and ethics (largely devoid of religious overtones), ambition, a sense of civic responsibility, leadership, and a certain New England-style attitude that there is a prevailing logic to life. Though seemingly entrenched in Southern ways, a disproportionate number of family members retained qualities bequeathed by their forebears who descended on Georgia from Connecticut. Many of them acknowledged respect for their Northern origins, and some even developed an annual nesting instinct for Mystic. Perhaps none exhibited the Yankee business ethic of the twentieth-century Tifts more than Richard Ashe Tift, whose success, according to one account, may be attributed to "his ability to think ahead, to foresee trends and movements, to act accordingly and to maintain confidence in his judgment." What sustained him and bore out his judgment, however, was "his faith in this section of the country, in its desirability for living, growing, and attaining eventual prosperity."[101] But there was no lack of other ardent spirits of his generation, in either Albany or Tifton branches, whose paternal oversight led to improvements in their state and respective communities. None were direct Northern transplants, but all of them practiced the Yankee work ethic in a Southern environment.

7

Reckoning with Race

> Negro entered into white man as profoundly as white man entered into Negro—subtly influencing every gesture, every word, every emotion and idea, every attitude.—Wilbur J. Cash
>
> You can't be Southern without being black and you can't be a black Southerner without being white. —Ralph Ellison[1]

Much of the success of the Tifts in Georgia owed not only to the energy, imagination, and strength of character drawn from their New England roots, but to their assimilation into Southern life and privileged families of the region. The most telling characteristic of these relationships, for Albany and Tifton branches alike, is that they were entrenched within the predominant white culture. Like their Southern neighbors, the Tifts were always conscious of the color line and rarely sought to cross it. Most realized that economic prosperity and even physical survival depended on not violating regional social norms. Yet the racial mix in South Georgia was such that family members had to interact daily with the sizable black population. These relationships fit into three timeframes. The first was the slavery era, which only Nelson and his young family experienced. It was followed by nearly a century of segregation and suppression of blacks, so aptly captured by Ulrich B. Phillips's famous dictum in 1928 that the core of Southern heritage consisted of a "common resolve" that the region "shall be and remain a white man's country."[2] The experiences of three generations of Georgia Tifts in this study fit into that era. During the 1960s, however, a new cultural dynamic emerged with the Civil Rights movement, which required further adaptations. Only the latest generations, the subject of the final chapter, have had to reckon with this new racial discourse.

The vast majority of studies on race in the South, however, have appeared in this third period. Reflecting present perspectives, they portray a racial climate of cruelty, violence, protest, confrontation, and courageous striving for racial justice. A chapter in one such account is appropriately titled "Discord, Dissension, and Hatred."[3] That respectful, functional, or caring relationships might have existed between the races is deemed impossible. Black Southerners, according to Leon Litwack, feigned goodwill by engaging in an "etiquette of accommodation and survival." Paternalistic whites are dismissed as clinging to "fantasies" that "knew few if any restraints."[4] Likewise Joel Williamson's investigation of black-white relations in the American South finds few redeeming qualities in a system that so totally subjected one race to another. From 1850 to 1915, he concludes, the South "switched from a racial pattern in which black people were firmly included in the society by way of slavery to one in which they were effectively excluded." This "crusade for whiteness" led to segregation and injustices in all facets of life.[5] Williamson dismisses any accommodations to Jim Crow, such as paternalism, as sham, while other authors have interpreted them merely as acts of self-interest for whites and survival for blacks.[6]

While hardly departing from the theme of the inequities inherent in paternalism, Melissa Walker's 2003 study on "shifting boundaries" views it more as a coping mechanism for both races in a segregated society. Whites, "as the superior race, had an obligation to teach inferior and incompetent blacks how to get along in the world and be good citizens. In return, blacks had an obligation to work hard, to obey whites, and to show them appropriate deference and loyalty." But Walker maintains that "genuine mutual aid between blacks and whites did exist" in this polarized system, citing instances where they shared farming and caregiving roles. What facilitated such exchanges was a mutual understanding that blacks would always stay in their place and a perception that some whites were "better than others."[7] Invariably, these "better" whites, who were generous, kind, and likely to dispense small favors, were from a higher social status. As a black Mississippian related to sociologist Charles Johnson, the poor white folks "is them that ain't got nothing, but thinks they is somebody. They like to pick on Negroes. They cheat them, 'buse them and meddle with them. An aristocratic white person is more decent about it. 'Course they cheat Negroes too, but they's nice about the way they do it."[8] That racial prejudice was pervasive among the Tifts is certain, but it was largely

subliminal or muted. There is scant evidence that postbellum generations of the family "picked" on blacks or showed anything less than respect or kindness to them. The prevailing paternalism of the vast majority of Tift family members suggests symbiosis rather than strife. Their experiences show that for all the disengagement of races inherent in a segregated society, there were still meaningful engagements for many whites and blacks at a basic human level.

As evident in an earlier chapter, Nelson Tift, along with his brother Asa, endeared himself with his Southern compatriots in every possible way, by stalwart defense of slavery and secession, by earnest efforts on behalf of the Confederacy, and by stern opposition to radical reconstruction, earning him a reputation as one of Georgia's foremost redeemers. His repeated harsh treatment of blacks and outspoken belief in their genetic inferiority coincided with these commitments. By 1876, however, he had to concede that his previous position was no longer tenable and that Georgia could no longer remain out of step with the nation. In his centennial address he sought racial reconciliation by thanking blacks for their "fidelity" during the difficult war years.

> Whilst the providential abolition of slavery was a blessing to the white race, we trust it will be no less a blessing to the colored race; and here I wish to say to their credit, that by their general good conduct, both during the war when they were left at home to take care of the families and plantations of the absent soldiers, and since they were made free and constituted citizens, they have entitled themselves to the gratitude of the country. May they continue to do well and prosper.[9]

Although Nelson, conditioned under the ethos of the Old South, likely never deviated from his white supremacist views, there is no indication that he willfully oppressed blacks in his later years. Indeed the presence of a section of "Colored Citizens" behind other aggregations at his funeral procession in 1891 suggests a modicum of respect for him within Albany's African-American community.[10]

A dilemma encountered by Nelson and Nelson Franklin in the aftermath of the war was how to relate to their former slaves. The latter, who grew up in the antebellum period, no doubt shared his father's sentiments about race, but he was always close to blacks. According to his granddaughter, Aimee Tift Hodges, "Papa" was a student at Virginia Military

Institute when the war broke out and took his "body servant" Ishmael Lonon with him, a not uncommon practice among Southern soldiers. "I just love thinking about that, taking a servant to war." Later, as a free man, Lonon was extended the right of suffrage and elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1880. "When asked how he would vote, he replied, 'Just like Mr. Tift.'" Aimee says her grandmother, Susan Hall Tift, was given a servant girl named Ann on her sixteenth birthday in February 1865, but the end of the war soon brought liberation.

> Susan: "Ann, you are free to go."
> Ann: "Well, where are you going?"
> Susan: "Nowhere, this is my home."
> Ann: "Well this is my home too, and I'm not going nowhere either."
> Susan: "You know that I can't afford to pay you."
> Ann: "Well, you never have, so what's the difference."[11]

Years later Aimee recalls that a grandson of Ann came to visit Aimee's mother, Irene, because "he was having trouble with his rebellious son and wanted to show him the quality of white people who owned his ancestors." She also recalls that Nelson Franklin took communion at the black Episcopal church every third Sunday to encourage blacks to attend church. "The pastor was well-educated and a good friend of Nelson. They were very close." Aimee insists that tales of how African Americans "suffered and were mistreated and beaten are simply not true. Everything was segregated," but their cook, named Ella, "was like a second Mama. Her husband cleaned the house, and it was beautifully kept." Aimee's sister Julia remembers Ella as a nurse who provided stability for their family. Ella was "sweet and gentle, hardworking and long suffering, and I loved her always. She was a constant in my life." Neither Julie nor Aimee can recollect any conflict or tension between blacks and whites in Albany prior to the 1960s.[12]

Although Henry and Orville Tift had grown up in the antebellum era, they had virtually no exposure to slavery or blacks in Connecticut. But upon establishing his sawmill and other industries in Tifton, it was necessary for Henry to rely on newly liberated blacks as a cheap and prevalent source of labor. He provided a separate community for them in Phillipsburg in south Tifton, and they walked to work. But the Tifts had more intimate contact with the blacks they hired as servants. Virginia (Presh) Brumby, who grew

up in the home of Henry and Bessie, recalls that relations with blacks were always good. "We knew and loved all of them. They were good workers and good people—our best friends. The color line was still there, but we were always kind to the negro people and helped them." An "old mammy" presided over the kitchen. Presh also remembers Julie as a younger housekeeper who was "sweet and so good to me." Jeff, the yard man, was a "character." He chopped wood and mowed grass, but also waited on tables and took out the garbage. "He was practically a member of the family."[13] Jeff Mathis was particularly close to Henry, for whom he served as chauffeur.

In a 1972 interview for an article, "Former Chauffeur Had Good Times With Capt. Tift," Mathis related how he joined the family about 1905 to do odd jobs such as hitching up the horse and buggy and sweeping the yard. He later learned to drive when the Captain and Bessie took him bird shooting with them. He practiced in the field while they hunted. As a result of his many errands and close proximity to the family, Mathis came to know and understand his employer well. Jeff recalled that Henry was

> strict in business and he'd walk across from his house to the commissary every morning. He was a great worker but when he got kinda jady-eyed, he's have me drive him out to one of his farms.
>
> I asked, "What did he do there."
>
> "He'd watch his cattle and sometimes he's have me pick 'im some blackberries." Jeff laughed, "Then, sometimes, he's help me pick 'berries and we'd both eat 'em. Cap'n jus'wanted to git out where nobody didn't know where he was."
>
> Jeff puffed his pipe and commented, "Cap'n understood me and I did him, too."
>
> "How's that?"
>
> "After I drove for him awhile, I got so's I jus' turned around to look at 'im when I come to a crossroads. He didn't have to say nothin'. He'd jus' pointin' one way or the other with his finger. Didn't have to say nothing to me. We understood."

Mathis also provided transport for the family's yearly sojourns to Connecticut. While the Tifts went there by train, Jeff would take Henry's air-cooled Franklin to Savannah, sail with it to New York, then drive to Mystic. While there, Jeff often accompanied Henry, who could not swim, on his sailboat, *The Annie*, probably as much for safety as for company. After

Henry and Bessie died, Jeff worked for the family of their son Tommy, with whom he was equally compatible.[14]

While the relationship between the Tifton Tifts in Henry's time and individual Aftrican Americans can be described as intimate and caring, the latter were almost totally excluded from any stake in the development of the community. In a 1912 article in the *Atlanta Journal* to promote immigration, Tifton is extolled as "one of the most thriving and prosperous of the modern successful Southern cities" and, in a phrase later echoed by U. B. Phillips, the surrounding county was "White Man's Country." It was "a notable fact that the white population of Tift County is heavily preponderant with just sufficient negroes to adequately supply the community's help and labor requirements. Not a foot of ground in the city of Tifton is owned by negroes and less than 1 per cent of the total area of the county is so owned."[15] Thus Henry's land development enterprises, including the ones that attracted Ohioans and Pennsylvanians, were for whites only. He had no intention of sharing the prosperity of his boom town with blacks or deviating in any other way from the region's racial doctrine. Even in his philanthropy, for which he has been justly praised, there was a racial disequilibrium. In one of the few recorded instances of his generosity to a black enterprise, one of Henry's sawmill employees, Johnny Wilson, who went to Tuskegee Institute for an education, sought to create an "industrial" school for blacks. After gaining no financial support from either city or county boards of education, he personally solicited the aid from his white friends. Owing to Bessie's encouragement, H. H. Tift donated six acres of land for construction of the Tift County Industrial School. Although the school had growing pains, including Wilson's departure to Augusta, it eventually succeeded. But Bessie's spirit of Christian charity, and Henry's money, hardly extended as much to black institutions as to white educational enterprises such as Tift College.[16] However laudable their sensitivity to the welfare of individual blacks (admittedly linked to self-interest), it was offset by a disregard for African Americans on a broader level, where the Tifts adhered to the traditions of their society.

No doubt Orville had many of the same experiences with blacks as his brother. But his daughter, Katherine Tift-Jones, whose career lifted her out of the parochial confines of South Georgia, not only interpreted black

culture for white audiences in the North but later shared memories of her Southern upbringing with her Yankee grandson.

> My little world contained all that was necessary for happiness. I had my parents and Mammy and Gussie—they were sufficient. Not until many years later did I realize the important part Mammy played in my life. She was my nurse until I grew too big to need one, then she became the Duenna of the household, regulating our morals and our manners. Never was I more severely reprimanded by your [Great] Grandmother than by Mammy. If I was rude or boisterous, she would say, "Shame on you—you is the 'quality' chile—de pore white trash acts dat-a-way, not de 'quality' chillum." She had insight into human nature that was uncanny. Once we had a guest, a woman of wealth and education, but after she left, Mammy came to mother and said, "Uhn-uhn she ain't de 'quality,' she jes ain't de 'quality.'" Mother replied, "Mammy, you mustn't say that. She's a lady of great wealth. She's well-educated and has traveled all over the world." Mammy interrupted—"Miss Liza, I ain't talkin' bout what she *got*. I is talking bout what she *ain't* got." ...Mammy commented on everyone that came and her evaluation of people was usually correct. I remember how we laughed when Mother came home from a visit to a friend. Mammy was always anxious to get any new recipes, for she took great pride in her cooking. This time she asked, "if Miss Liza had had anything new and interesting to eat?" Mother replied, "no, Mammy, I didn't. But I did have some of the worst hash I've ever tasted." "What were de matter wid it, Miss Liza?" Mother explained, "It was full of gristle, little bones and skin—just carelessly prepared." Quietly Mammy said, "Lordy, Miss Liza, hit takes a lady to make hash."
>
> The relationship between master and servant is difficult to describe. It was intimate, but never familiar. They were a part of the family. Our honors and our disgraces was [sic] theirs. What a wealth of devotion they poured into our lives. Once your Uncle Orville was very ill, so ill, we thought he couldn't live. Coming out of his room one night, Mother found Mammy seated on a rug outside his door. "Mammy, what are you doing here," she said, "you should be in your cabin getting your rest. There is so much extra work to do." Mammy looked up with her soft brown eyes and said, "Miss Liza, lemme set here-de little Master might need me." And she sat, all night, every night, for three weeks, in case her "little master" came out of his delirium and asked for her. Is it any wonder that we loved her?[17]

Much of what Tift-Jones took onstage caricatured and stereotyped black culture in a manner similar to the black-face shows of her era. Indeed her audiences would tolerate nothing less. But behind it was a caring relationship that shaped her Southern identity.

Most revealing, however, were her extemporaneous thoughts about race. Inasmuch as she was a Southern woman who was "half Northern... each half could talk about the other half of her." Quoting Edwin Howland Blashfield, the American painter, she observed that "the Southerner loves the negro as an individual, while the Northerner loves him as a race." Obviously sympathetic to her Southern side, she longed for the serenity of the good-old days and "placed the blame squarely on the white race for the change in the relation between white man and Negro that has come in recent years." To illustrate this uneasiness, Tift-Jones cited a Northern woman who tried to treat her black maid as an equal, only to hear the latter say "she'd never been treated so before—oh no! but then her mistress down south 'She was a lady.'" Similarly, equality allegedly led to civil disorder. She contrasted the safety of women in Civil War days "when not one negro left in charge ever betrayed a trust," with her own time "when every woman goes armed when riding or motoring alone." In the entertainment field she regretted the decline of African-American "jazz, its beauty coarsened and cheapened by the white man."[18] One can only imagine how she would have reacted to gangster rap!

Even more traditional were her thoughts on the "negro question," shared with journalist Joe Mitchell Chapple in a 1924 article headed "Flashlights of Famous People." With "no apologies" and "with an eloquent glow on her face," Tift-Jones believed

> the negro should go on his bended knees and thank God for some of the years of bondage. It was a means of bringing a race to quick fruition. During the period of two hundred years in slavery the negro as a class acquired what it had taken the Anglo-Saxon fourteen hundred years to accomplish—language, the Christian religion, the use of tools, the domestic and agricultural art and now, best of all, triumphant freedom. ...There was sacrifice, as there is always sacrifice with progress, but it seems to me no such terrible suffering as the white race endured during that long struggle upward, with its thousands of battles, famines, and all the other hideous atrocities that seem to lie in the pathway of the onward traveler.

Chapple concluded that as a "true daughter of the Southland," Tift-Jones was "in love with the negro of the old time" who epitomized antebellum ideals of loyalty, trustworthiness, and faithful service.[19] What made her performances so convincing is that despite her Yankee heritage and her current home in the North (as a double transplant!), she embraced the ambience of the era through her onstage characters.

No doubt other Tifts shared her sentiments, but few could reveal them so publicly or so eloquently. Maurice W. Tift, Katherine's generational counterpart in Albany, had ample opportunity to enact a racial agenda, but there is no indication that he did. As mayor he encouraged the growth of Albany Bible and Manual Training Institute (now Albany State University).[20] Its founder, Joseph Winthrop Holley, observed in his 1948 autobiography that "men are greatly interested in how white and black people live together in the South. We have our troubles, yet we continue to live together." In stark contrast to earlier observations by W. E. B. Dubois, he had "faith in Southern white people" who had a feeling for his race that was "unknown to the Northern white man. Two hundred and fifty years of slavery bred into the Southern white man an interest in the Negro that is found nowhere else in the world."[21] In February 1917 Mayor Tift, with other white civic leaders, presided over the dedication of Caroline Hall, the institute's administration building. Their presence, reported the *Albany Herald*, was the highlight of the occasion. It "served to bring about a better understanding between the best elements of the two races...and there followed an exchange of congratulation and cordial expression of good will, with mutual pledges of cooperation." In autographing his book, Holly recognized Maurice as "one of the best friends and helpers of the Negroes in Southwest Ga." who had "rendered more service to me in building a college for my people than any other person." Further to illustrate the congenial racial relations in Albany, Holley noted that some of his "greatest hardships" stemmed from "bad behavior" of his own people, that he was often treated with less respect when traveling in the North, and that there had never been a lynching in Dougherty County.[22]

On another occasion Maurice drew praise from the black community for fairness. B. F. Cofer called his speech to the Supreme Circle of Benevolence (a secret order) "the best ever heard from the lips of a white man. ...Our bosoms rose and fell with gratitude as we sat and listened to this great and noble man who spoke out of the fullness of his big and manly

heart, which surely was filled with the love of Jesus Christ. ...We wish we had more Tifts, yea, that all the white people of America were Tifts."[23] According to David Sherman, local blacks "always appeared to like granddaddy and daddy" who "treated them fairly" and never took advantage of them in business dealings. Maurice and Mercer also assisted with their legal problems, provided small "loans" that usually turned out to be gifts, and attended funerals of blacks who were close to the family. "Of course granddaddy needed their votes when he was running for re-election as county commissioner." He often went to their churches and worked with black preachers on political issues affecting their people. Maurice's family was also close to its black servants. One of them, named Missouri, worked for Lula who had a nervous facial twitch. Sometimes Missouri, says Sherman, stood behind Lula and imitated her, evoking mirth from the family. Yet even in the midst of such familiarity, segregation prevailed. There was a "very severe color line, particularly on Uncle Maurice's farm," recalls Nelson Tift Joyner, where the workforce was 99% black with a white overseer. "The family was a product of their generation, and black people were there to provide services in the house and yard. There was mutual respect but in no ways integration."[24]

Much the same master/servant relationship existed in the family of Maurice's brother, Samuel Hall Tift. His daughter, Susan McGough, explains that he was spoiled as a child and had always been waited on by servants. A black man named Roy was always by his side as a chauffer and gardener and even helped with his business as a cotton broker. "That was the Southern way of life back then," she recalls. "Northerners don't understand the Southern way of life—how much love there was for them. That's always how it was. My daddy was an old Southern gentleman." It was a "warm relationship" between blacks and whites, even to the extent that many Tifts were raised by blacks and would talk like them as children. The family of her husband, Henry, in Alabama was also "very close to their Blacks. Now there's a lot of animosity between the races. It was never like that when I was growing up." Her younger brother Robert confirms that his father relied a lot on black workers and that he had a big garden from which they extracted produce to sell in local markets. Then there was a black woman who did the laundry and carried baskets of clothes on her head. Robert also remembers having black playmates. While equality was never the norm, "relations were very good."[25]

The sixth generation of Tifts was no less engaging with blacks during the age of segregation. On the Tifton side Virginia Brumby, acting on the assumption that Henry Harding, Sr. was "above the race issue," conveyed these sentiments to her children. Mike Brumby recalls that his father had about forty black workers in his rocking chair factory and "they seemed to like him." His father assured him that "a black man's blood was just as red as a white man's blood." He had seen enough of it shed in World War II. Mike's uncle, Henry Harding III, had to deal with segregation in his medical practice. Although he treated blacks and whites in the same office, the former had to use a back door and a separate waiting room. According to his son William, "he never turned anyone down, even those who could not pay. Blacks were always in the Tift household, including a cook and yard man." William's father and maternal grandfather even purchased houses in Macon's black section for several of their workers. "There was a lot of mutual respect."[26] When one of their servants, Naomi Alexander, became an invalid, Henry gave money to her church and Tinky visited her regularly. "Not only do I thank you for your kindness to my church," but "also to me," she wrote in 1981. "Mrs Tift's visit each month means more to me than I'll ever be able to express." William's brother Jerry, who grew up in the same household, agrees that black/white "relations were good. In the South we hated the race and loved them as individuals."[27]

Willie Mae Preston was born in rural Jones County in 1932. Her father was a sharecropper, then a sawmill worker in Gordon. Her mother was a housekeeper. Willie Mae started working at age eight as a sitter and housekeeper, quit school and eloped at sixteen, and had seven children. She eventually worked for three generations of Tifts over six decades—Christine's father (W. G. Lee), Henry and Christine, and their sons Jerry and William. Willie Mae says she "cooked, cleaned, did laundry, and took care of the children. It was not hard work. We all had a good relationship. When they put up with me for fifty years, they must be a very good family. It was one big happy family." According to Jerry's wife, Carol, she is "a lot more familiar with Willie Mae than Buster and Tinky ever were—much more easy-going." Willie Mae even calls her "Carol." But it was still strictly a working, not a social, relationship. In addition to wages Willie Mae received "a lot of benefits." Tinky gave her clothes, especially around Christmas. She received two weeks vacation and a bonus and got some free medical help,

including eye surgery. At the end of 1986 Willie Mae expressed her gratitude:

> Not just for the car but all of your kind acts to me for all of these years. You were so kind and considerate to me throughout all of 1986 when I was having such a rough time. It is nice people like you that makes your burdens a little easier to bear. I know I will get a lot more miles out of the car as I am already enjoying driving it. ...If the world had more people like Dr & Mrs Tift it would be a much better place to live in.

Unlike many of the Tifts, Willie Mae was never struck with wanderlust. On visits to New York and Chicago, she never saw anything she especially liked and seemed content to come back to Georgia. "I belong in the South," she says.[28]

Catherine Tift Porter had an even closer relationship with the blacks in her household. Much as Willie Mae Preston moved to successive generations after W. G. Lee, the servants of Henry Harding Tift, including Jeff Mathis, found employment with Tommy and Catherine Tift. "The Blacks raised us," she recalls. "I knew the Blacks better than my mother and father, and when I went away to college I had a black accent. What northerners don't understand is that there is a real bond between Whites and Blacks. I always got along with Blacks real well." She attributes many of her Southern characteristics to being close to individual black people. On a more general level, however, she admits to holding prejudices that were handed down to her. "If something is missing, it was stolen by a black." Tee feels she is overcoming this mistrust, but occasionally it will surface. "In the South we had to get along and did. We all knew that Blacks had a hard time way back. I often thanked the Lord that I was White, as well as for food and health." Despite any residual prejudice, Tee feels a compassion for those close to her. She employed "Annie" (Irene) Wyms to raise her youngest son Russell, then to nurse her husband Jimmy's mother. "Annie stayed thirteen years and ended up doing everything." Catherine showed her respects by attending her funeral at the Warren Memorial United Methodist Church in Atlanta in January 2006.[29]

Reverend Richard Winn, who conducted the rites, had come to know Mrs. Wyms well and the relationship she had with Tee Porter. "It went far beyond a normal working tie," according to Winn. "Mrs. Porter not only invited her into her home but into her personal life. Irene was educated by

the respect she was given and gained a greater sense of community. It was a tremendous fit." The Porters not only gave her financial support when she arrived from Ohio but helped her understand some of the finer things in life.

> Although Irene was not trained or well-educated and was a private and quiet person, she attended a church that was made up of a large number of upper middle class African Americans, including a large number of Ph.Ds. Mrs. Porter taught this woman class. She wore finer clothes, learned about fine china, and wore a hat every Sunday to church. Mrs. Porter was very kind. She had a good understanding of the human spirit.

According to Winn, the feeling of friendship was mutual, and there was never any sense of racial disparity. "It went beyond race. It was a shared humanity."[30]

Catherine's brother, Tommy, is a businessman with an open mind regarding race. Unlike many of his conservative counterparts in the private sector, he provided equal opportunities for blacks to attain responsible positions. Like Joseph Holley and some of the subjects in Charles Johnson's study, Tommy does not believe ability and goodness to be racially exclusive. "It depends on the Black" is his approach to hiring. "I have nothing against Blacks because they are black, but you've got to be careful in business. You can't afford to employ the wrong one." He is also "realist enough to know that I'd never buy property in a black section. I don't like it, but I don't know what I can do about it." His hiring of Dallas Smith, a graduate of Lakeshore High School and Georgia State University, in 1984 illustrates Tommy's intent to find the most qualified personnel, regardless of race. A 1989 profile in the *Atlanta Metro* described their relationship.

> Mr. Tift's company owns 80 acres near Hartsfield International Airport, of which includes an office building and 280,000 square feet of warehouse space. Dallas was hired as Atlanta Air Center's Marketing Director and acted as the company's exclusive agent for the past five years. It was very strange that Dallas and Tommy would even meet one another, let alone work together. Dallas, an inner city kid from Dixie Hills, and Tommy, a blue blood from Buckhead. Tommy's family, the Tifts have roots in Tift County, Tift College and Piedmont Cotton Mills, which at one time was one of the biggest and largest employers in the City of East Point. ...What is even stranger is that Dallas and Tommy have started a new company, First Brokerage, Inc., Tommy's providing the capital and Dallas his expertise in Commercial Real Estate. ...First Brokerage handles tenant representation,

> consulting, and leasing and sales of warehouses, office buildings, retail, investment property and raw land. Dallas has worked with clients ranging from hair salons to internationally known authors to fortune 500 companies.

Dallas attributed his success in a largely white business environment to an ethical approach, stemming from religious convictions. "The reason a fortune 500 company uses me is for the same reason mom and pop shops use me, and that is because they trust me." Employing a "Check and Balance system" as his *leit motif*, client satisfaction was more important than a prospective commission. Tommy Tift expresses pride in hiring women and blacks at the Atlanta Air Center. "It would be hard to call me a racist."[31]

"Nothing but love" is the way Weetie Rankin describes relations between the races in her family. She recalls that there were always black servants in her parents' household. The one she remembers best was J. D. Henry, who left their employment to serve on General Eisenhower's staff in World War II. Though married, he fathered a child to a French woman. Not knowing whether he should abandon his baby in France or forsake his wife and family in Georgia, he asked Weetie's mother for advice. "Dear Miss Tift," he wrote. "You's is the only Mama I ever had." J. D. returned to America and was eventually "inherited" by Homer and Weetie to cook, babysit, and garden. When he died, they attended his funeral. Amos Chapman Tift III (Chappie), Weetie's nephew, also remembers J. D. and his wife Mattie, but his most vivid memories relate to one of his own family's servants, Carrie Bell Cotton, whom they found living in a car.

> Carrie Bell was straight out of "Gone with the Wind." She was a mess. She loved to drink whisky and dance. If you wanted to get her to do anything just offer her a drink. Tobacco buyers would come down once a year and visit my dad and mom, and they would always bring a house gift of a fifth of whisky for Carrie Bell. She loved beer and Beechnut snuff. She was dedicated to us. She would kill if anyone messed with us—my brother and sister. When my parents told her to watch us, she took it seriously. She was a little bitty thing, but she was full of piss and vinegar.

Another fond memory was Johnny Tabor, who mowed the lawn at the Tift house with young Chappie on his shoulders while singing. "He was always in a good mood. Relations with Blacks were always good." Drawing on conversations with the black supervisor at the school where she works, Serita, Chappie's wife, observes that "the Tifts were highly thought of

because they were so good to Blacks." Over the two decades the Rankins edited the *Tifton Gazette*, which spanned the Civil Rights era, the racial issue never came up. But Weetie feels "sorry for people living in Albany where the Blacks have taken over." Despite a lifelong closeness to blacks, the erstwhile color line persists in her consciousness, as it does in her speech with the use of the term "nigra."[32]

Clara Bell Tabor Johnson, however, harbors no resentments towards any of the Tifts for whom she, her sister Luella, and parents worked over many years. Clara cooked, cleaned, watched children, and even picked cotton for Amos Chapman and Lutrelle Tift. She recalls the latter as a taskmaster when it came to polishing silver or ironing clothes. "Everything had to be spotless and right." But Lutrelle was "sweet," and in retrospect "it was good for me. It helped make me a perfectionist." It was likewise for their daughter-in-law Doris, according to Clara.

> I took pride in my work. I wanted to see things shine and be able to show a difference. I would pull the refrigerator out and clean the kitchen floor. I even cleaned her organ. She liked all her glasses to shine, and I never broke anything. I took pride out of seeing my image on the shiny dining room table. I just enjoyed working for Mrs. Tift. She was so sweet. Anything they couldn't use was given to me. She gave me clothes and food and a white Plymouth once—my first car. Wages were also decent. They were lovable people and very generous. We sometimes cooked for a hundred. We were all pretty good cooks. I worked for Miss Weetie too. They'se some good peoples. All of them. If they could help, they were ready to help. Never unkind or unfair. We were just like family. We all helped each other. ...When my sister got locked up for shooting a boy, Miss Rankin came and soothed our family and helped free my sister.

Clara retains fond memories of bygone times when "people cared for each other" and has mixed feelings about the momentous social changes since the 1960s.

> The civil rights movement has been a good thing, but people got away from what it originally meant. It was better then than now. There's more prejudice now than then. They had religion back then. Now there's been a decline in religion and morality. Getting rid of separate water fountains was good. But back in the 1940s and 50s we worked and had a good time. Now children have nothing to do. We would sing as we worked and we would praise God. The love of people existed back then. We picked cotton in the heat, but we

> enjoyed it. We had a great time. Now there is so much stealing and robbing. Children need someone to love them. Now parents neglect them.

Neglect was a condition Clara never felt while working for the Tifts, nor did she ever feel bitterness or resentment over any sense of inequality or exploitation. "No color line really—just family." Once she recalls that the bowels of one of the Tift children wouldn't move, so Clara held him and "prayed for him and his bowels moved. Praise God." The doctor could not help him, but Clara did. More recently she encountered Roy Rankin, one of Weetie's children, in downtown Tifton. "We hugged each other, and people on the street must have been wondering." Clara strongly echoes Weetie's description of relations between her family and the Tifts as "nothing but love."[33]

The color line in Albany was very evident to Jack Currie, a British aviator who trained briefly at Darr Aero Tech in 1942. He found the base facilities "impressive, the barracks comfortable and the food magnificent." Most striking were the black servants he encountered. "A cheerful retinue of coloured men waited at table," he wrote. "I was beginning to wonder whether any white American ever served himself."[34] What Currie could not comprehend, coming from a colorless society, was the depth of racial divide in the South, which persisted into the 1960s. Resentful of the Democratic administration's "betrayal" by its support of the Civil Rights movement in 1963, Ernestine Sherman reflected traditional paternal views in reminding her Congressman that

> there are many persons, both North and South who are conscientious segregationists. It hasn't been a sin to have separate facilities all these years and we believe that if the negroes are as mistreated "as they claim"—they couldn't afford to run around demonstrating or afford the fine clothes and the cars they have. If they'd concentrate on setting themselves up in business ad infinitum they could do more good.
>
> Please, please do what you can to stop this civil rights "push." It and the Supreme Court's decision has [sic] created hate where none existed before. The more it is pushed the more hate there will be. I have relatives up north who feel as strongly about this as we do in the South. Don't disappoint us again. I've seen a great stiffening of resistance here.[35]

Nor could British airmen, some of whom had been Ernestine's guests, understand the extent to which black servants were embedded in Albanian households. For the fifth-generation Tifts, the intimacy of these relationships was most evident on the plantation of Richard Tift. His half-sister, Sue McGough, recalls a "precious old black woman" named Rachel who "ran the house and acted almost like she owned it. She had been there so long that she felt like it was hers." Rachel cooked and supervised the other servants. "Richard got along great with the Blacks. They were almost like family, and Rachel was like the Mammy in Gone With The Wind." Sue recalls once as Richard was hosting his wealthy guests at The Oaks, Edgar Bergen, who was not above practical jokes, threw his voice up the chimney and said, "Rachel come here and see me." She came, looked up the chimney and said, "where is you." "Blacks knew their place," says Sue, "but they were treated with respect and love. They were like family, and yet they weren't family."[36]

Huddy Hudgens agrees that Richard Tift's relations with blacks were exceedingly cordial. "His Black help thought the world of him. They got looked after well." But he always had a "broader vision," and as early as 1942 he warned Senator Richard Russell that he was "quite worried" about the racial situation in Southwest Georgia.[37] In 1961 when Martin Luther King, Jr. joined the civil disobedience campaign in Albany and was jailed, Tift "did not want to see a Montgomery situation here, so he got the plantation owners to post bond to get him out." According to Hudgens, King did not want bond, but "Mr. Tift collected the money and turned it over to Asa Kelley, the mayor, and B. C. Gardner, the city attorney. Most people have no idea where the money came from."[38] King called it a "cunning tactic." Police Chief Laurie Pritchett observed that "this was the only time I've ever seen when [it] seemed he didn't know which way to go." Fellow activist Ralph Abernathy was also taken aback. "I've been thrown out of a lot of places in my day but I've never been thrown out of jail." Tift's generosity was a setback to the Civil Rights movement in Albany, where King had far less impact than he did in other Southern cities. As Lee Formwalt attests, King "had failed to desegregate the city—but he learned some important lessons that he...would carry to Birmingham."[39] Indeed, just after the Birmingham demonstrations and George Wallace's schoolhouse stand in 1963, ex-City Commissioner C. B. Pritchett observed to local Congressman J. L. Pilcher that

> following the Movement's defeat in Albany, many many months passed before it was tried again. This time they had a *purported* win which signaled a demonstration throughout the nation. I mention these two episodes only to show that here in Albany and your District the Mass Demonstrations started and here as nowhere else we foresaw the future of their plan (win in B'Ham was the needed spark—not the loss in Albany).

Another racially motivated initiative, but with mixed results, was the decision by the trustees of the South Dougherty Community Center, after it lost tax-exempt status, to donate the center to the Phoebe Foundation on condition that the plantation owners still be allowed to use it. To curry the favor of African Americans, they transferred the property to a local black organization, which sold it to the hospital for a profit. But to ensure the facility remained segregated, Richard kept a twenty-foot strip of land that separated the center from the highway. Otherwise, Hudgens muses, "the only thing segregated in Albany any more is the funeral homes."[40]

David Sherman's perception of black/white relations in the household of Mercer and Ernestine Sherman squares with that of both Albany and Tifton Tifts. "We grew up more integrated than we are today, but segregated. I can't think of instances where any of the Tifts or my father treated blacks with disrespect. I grew up knowing the Ku Klux Klan were white trash." Almost every day Mercer worked with Ed McKinney, who was black and "a close friend." David also recalls:

> House blacks were like one of the family. Field blacks were not, but we still liked them. Mattie Mansfield was like a second mother to us, and had full authority to whip us...when Ernestine and Mercer went away. She said till her old age she had never had to hit "her boys" and carried our pictures with her until she died. I visited her in the hospital in her declining days and still love Mattie. She sure helped raise us, along with Lucy Troutman. These type blacks were truly a part of the family.

White families would go to black funerals and were expected to offer a personal eulogy to the deceased. David also remembers blacks sitting in the back pews of the Episcopal church he attended as a child. "It was a very complex situation. The complexity of the white/black relationship was in everything." To illustrate how much integration permeated the segregated South, Sherman cites a former boss of his, a liberal from Rhode Island who believed all Southerners were racists. He was having a problem with his new

boss who was black and finally asked David to intervene because the two of them seemed to have a "great relationship." David told the boss that he was being condescending, the point being that Sherman's boss had "never been around Blacks and didn't know how to relate to them. You have to have a knowledge of where each other is coming from. We had black servants living in the back alley behind the house at grandfather's, but they were with us all the time." To Sherman, the film *Driving Miss Daisy* comes closest to explaining the relationship between members of his family and their black servants.[41]

From the perspective of an assisted living facility in Mobile in the twenty-first century, Sue McGough reveals a compassion for the African Americans she has known. "I'm glad they have their rights now. The Ashe family had a lot of slaves. They even willed them. I am totally turned off by the idea of having slaves and selling slaves. Some of the ones that work here I just love. I respect them. That's the way I've always been." Among the blacks that Sue employed in her own family was Robbie Lee Watkins-Lowe, whom she acquired from her husband's family in Glennville, Alabama. Robbie Lee resembled Rachel in Richard Tift's household by the way she readily assumed authority. She helped Sue and Henry raise their children. "Robbie Lee was the best cook I have ever come across," recalls Sue. "We all loved her." After a near fatal accident in 1991, Robbie Lee moved to Cincinnati to be with her daughter, but Sue still expresses as much pride in her former servant's family as her own. "All of her children moved up North and have done very well. We keep in touch with her children, and they all speak so well. One of the grandchildren goes to Purdue University, and all of her children are very smart. I couldn't have lived without Robbie Lee," she says. Like so many other Tifts, McGough, while adhering to the segregationist expectations of her era, developed an intimate and functional relationship with the blacks in her household.[42]

Ona McGough Gilbert, Sue's daughter, recalls growing up with blacks in Glennville and how much she adored Robbie Lee. "We loved her."

> I can hardly talk about her without crying. The Ohio descendants of Robbie Lee are extremely well off, even though they were so dirt poor down here. A psychologist says that they've come to live so well because they were so close to the white folks. My sister and I were raised by Blacks. When I saw Robbie Lee a couple years ago, I cried because I hadn't seen her for so long. It had also been fifty years since I had seen her daughter Mary Francis, and despite

> that, Mary Francis said that "every year on September 29 I think of you because it's your birthday."

Ona's cousin, Sue Lyons, had a similar latter-day encounter with another former black servant named Cassie. "Sitting there with a shaw around her, she looked up and said, 'that's little Miss Sue.' The closeness was unbelievable. My sister Irene would get out of her bed in the morning and get into bed with one of the servants named Emma." Ona thought it was "the greatest honor in the world to get to sleep with them." Until she left Glennville at age nine, her family would visit its black employees every Sunday afternoon for tea and cookies. Ona admits to getting "emotional talking about our relationships. Who I am today is determined by what it was like with them at that time. I wouldn't give anything for it." In the 1980s she helped found an interdenominational organization in her Pensacola home called United Ministries to provide counseling and financial assistance for indigent blacks. Often, while interviewing, she sees Robbie Lee's face.[43]

Robbie Lee's family shares equally strong feelings for the McGoughs and the experiences they shared in Glennville. Her daughter, Mary Francis Dixon, confirms "we were like one big happy family," especially since Sue's husband was often out of town.

> There was never any friction. ...Mom got along with everyone. It was a sister-like relationship between mother and Sue. We never knew about any of that prejudice stuff that went on in the South. They were a loving caring family, and we never felt any sense of disrespect. We hope to be in touch for the rest of our lives. They were loving to us.

When asked whether Robbie Lee's family ever felt bitter about not having some of the advantages of the McGoughs, Mary Francis almost seemed resentful toward the question. "Truthfully no, we never felt deprived. Anything they had that they could share with us, they did. We didn't worry about something we didn't have since we didn't know about it," she responded. "Now that I look back, they didn't have that much more than we did." What they gained from the McGoughs was a sense of family and caring for people.[44]

Mary Francis's cousin, Lucille Fagin, agrees that the relationship between Robbie Lee and the McGoughs was excellent. She often accompanied

her aunt and Mary Francis to work and would play with the McGough children.

> It wasn't as bad as families are thought to be in the South. They treated us all as family. We were equals. I didn't see any difference. Sue was easy going. She reached out to everybody she came into contact with. There was never a time when I went to their home that I had to use the back door. We rode in their car with them. Ona and Betsy and Dee Dee [Ona's sisters] would sometimes come to Robbie Lee's to play. We watched TV together, ate cakes and biscuits, and played dolls and house. Color didn't seem to matter. I tell a lot of people who talk about racism and segregation in the South that the Caucasian people that I grew up with were never like that and I never experienced it. I cannot truly say that I was treated differently. I've always seen people as a creation of God and have always been close-minded to racism.

Growing up around the McGoughs helped make Lucille impervious to racial prejudice. Like Mary Francis, she shared with them the struggles of life. She remembers that Robbie Lee would bring vegetables from her garden to make sure there would be adequate food, and that Sue's husband would on occasion come to get her grandfather out of jail for making moonshine. "It was like all of us were trying to make it." Lucille eventually lost touch with the McGough sisters after she moved to Detroit and the McGoughs settled in other areas of the South. But through a fortuitous series of communications they reconnected and assembled for a reunion at Lucille's home in suburban Atlanta in June 2003. "It was fabulous," she recalls.

> You just had to be here to see and feel what happened when we got together. We cried all day. Words can't describe it. It was something. I wish we had videoed it. Saturday night, church on Sunday, and then Sunday afternoon. I didn't see any changes in Ona or Betsy. Physical features hadn't changed, personalities hadn't changed, and their hearts hadn't changed. And that is the important thing.

For those who would argue that racial enmity and misunderstanding were natural conditions of the South, the relationship between these Tift descendants and the blacks whose family worked for them proves directly to the contrary. It was a mutually supportive and permanent bond.[45]

Julia Smith Oliver was raised by her nurse Ella until she was twelve. Then she had almost no contacts with the black community until she had her first child, John, in Alabama and persuaded Ella to come back from Florida to care for her growing family. Then as John lay dying of polio in 1955, she hired Susie Vaughn of nearby Buttston for assistance. Susie stayed until 1976 and developed a special liking for Edward, Julia's third son. "I was hers," he fondly recalls, even to the extent that she would stand between Edward and his mother when Julia tried to discipline him.

> My brothers never received the same level of care. If I hit my younger brother William, Susie would slap him too. It was always his fault. I was her world, and I think this preferential treatment carried over into our later lives. I became more assertive and sure-footed. Bill is a lot more cautious and spends a lot of time making decisions. And it's probably reflected in our respective career choices of helicopter pilot and lawyer.

But Susie was cherished by the whole family. When Julia's second son, Francis, was dying, he expressed the wish that she be buried in their family plot. Edward's daughter, Abigail Vaughn Oliver, even carries her name into the next generation. One reason Julia loved her husband, John Oliver, so much was "he had no prejudice. That was wonderful because he was a judge."[46] In light of Julia's liberal political views, her family's paternalistic tradition of respecting the color line and relating to blacks almost solely in a service capacity may seem incongruous, particularly to non-Southerners!

Nelson Tift Joyner was a son of Julia Hall Tift and Edmund Noah Joyner and a nephew of Maurice Wheeler and Samuel Hall Tift. It is hardly surprising, as a South Carolinian and graduate of Virginia Military Institute, that he should exhibit many of the traditional attitudes towards blacks. According to his daughter, Sue Joyner Hine, he was a Southerner in manner, courtly and politically conservative, though he had a brief flirtation with Franklin Roosevelt. "Father's racial views reflected his Southern upbringing. He felt Blacks were service people and would never sit at the same table with them." He used the term "nigra" and even sent Sue to a girl's school in Louisville to avoid integration when they lived in Anchorage, Kentucky, in the late 1950s. Neither Sue nor her younger sister Virginia liked that attitude. Their older brother, Nelson Tift Joyner, Jr. concedes that his father was "a Southerner in his soul" and that "the exterior of his Southern soul was being a Southern gentleman—dedicated to politeness." But he became more

tolerant of blacks and eventually came around to believing in equal rights, including integration, and Virginia completed her education at a public high school.[47] This reconciliation may be attributed to his exposure to multiple influences, including marriage to Virginia Mount, a Yankee from Indiana, his employment with a national firm, Procter and Gamble, where racial lines were blurred, and to his living in areas such as Ohio, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and England, where racial prejudice was less a factor in everyday life. It was almost axiomatic that the farther Nelson Tift Joyner, Sr. got away from his Southern roots, the less pronounced was his racism. What was also lost was the intimate day-by-day contact with blacks that so many Tifts experienced and was no less a traditional feature of Southern life.

Nelson Tift Mitchell, a grandson of Maria Isabelle Tift and cousin of the Joyners, grew up with household servants. Before his father sold the Coca-Cola plant in Florida, his family had a cook, laundress, and nursemaid. He admits to being "prejudiced and racist," but he has always had a "kind and paternalistic" attitude towards blacks and has also tried to be fair. While working as a manager for Colonial Stores, he hired the first black cashier in Camilla in the 1960s. Later when Nelson promoted him, he got "cussed out by a lot of Whites." Much has changed in the racial climate in recent decades and Nelson's wife, Marjorie, knows "very few people in the South who have been unkind to Blacks. Southerners are prejudiced but not unkind," she says. "Northerners don't understand the relationship between Blacks and Whites. Mix, but don't socialize" is the rule. "That's just the way we are. We have learned tolerance in our older years." As with most other whites of their generation who find comfort in the securities and assumptions of the past, the Mitchells are concerned with the uncertainties of the future. "The next mayor of Camilla will probably be Black," observes Nelson. Although the Mitchells live in an assisted-care facility, they express concern over African Americans moving into neighborhoods and about black Muslims.[48]

Carl Blair (Bunny) Pritchett, Jr. belongs to the seventh generation of Tifts. He is the great-great-grandson of Nelson Tift through his youngest daughter, Irene. Bunny is best known as a businessman—Pritchett Ford—but like so many other Tifts, has engaged in public service, having served as a city commissioner and police committeeman in the early 1960s. But his major interest has been Civil War history. It started when he was serving on the *USS Coral Sea* in the Mediterranean during World War II, and his mother sent him a book on Stonewall Jackson. Eventually he established a

private museum with thousands of Civil War collectibles. Bunny admits that despite his interest in history, he does not connect with Civil Rights and the present. Nor does his museum "upset Blacks," he insists. But having been a city official at the dawn of the Civil Rights movement, he is understandably reticent on the subject of race. "We don't do any interviews," he says. "Everything is low key. It is a touchy subject."[49] His cousin Robert Tift, however, says that "Bunny doesn't care for Blacks, and he doesn't want to be buried in Albany because it is a black section." According to Sue McGough, "Bunny got on the outs with Blacks and that was bad for his business."[50] Bee McCormack, who grew up with Bunny, recalls him as "Peck's bad boy" and a real ladies man but also as extremely kind.[51] Former county commissioner Gil Barrett knew that "Bunny was rabid on the subject of civil rights" in the days of the Albany movement. Mayor Asa Kelly, on the other hand, was

> low key. It would have been easy for him to have lined up with Bunny and had the same policy as they had in Alabama. But we were determined that nothing would happen to King. When they marched we never had any real violence. Bunny, God bless him, was pretty well redneck. We had a couple others like him, but they didn't get enough support. He can vent his feelings now with his museum and collection.

Bunny, on the other hand, insists that he does not harbor "animosities or negative feelings towards Blacks."[52] Still, unlike virtually all of his South Georgia kin, he speaks of no warm or friendly relationship with blacks on an individual level.

A final black perspective comes from Jack Finley Hall (born 1927), the grandson of Henry and Ann Hall, who went to work for Nelson Tift at the end of the Civil War. Henry ran his dairy farm, and Ann ran the household as chief cook. Henry had formerly been a slave with the Hall family of Oglethorpe. Later they worked for Nelson Franklin and Maurice Wheeler, who set them up with a grocery business. According to Jack, treatment of his grandparents "was not that bad" and "they were considered part of the family, 'to a certain extent.' Their relationship was good, and I never heard about anything negative." In fact, Henry used his contacts with the Tifts to become better educated and improve himself. Maurice was an active Mason and after telling him about the order, Henry became a Mason. He conveyed these values to his son, Henry Reginald Hall, Sr., who had been a childhood friend of Maurice. After formal schooling in Albany, he became a pre-med

student at Howard University. Although he had to resign to care for his elderly parents, Henry Reginald became ambitious and entrepreneurial, much in the manner of the Tifts. After working as a conductor for the Canadian Pacific Railroad, he became a letter carrier in Albany. But he also pursued other business interests on his own, including a mattress shop, a concrete flowerpot business, a sundry (soda and ice cream) shop, logging, and even used car sales. In 1915 Henry Reginald married Annie Mae Finley of Atlanta, a graduate of Tuskegee Institute and the first family member with a college degree. She became one of the first black nurses at Phoebe Putney Hospital. As property owners between Whitney and Jackson Streets, the Halls were "fairly well off" and members of the small upper-middle-class community of blacks in Albany.[53]

That their acquisitive values were passed to the next generation is evident from the educational and career attainments of their three sons. Henry Reginald, Jr. (born 1917) attended Tuskegee Institute and is a retired Army officer living in Baltimore; Richard Walter (born 1921) attended Hampton Institute, flew for the Tuskegee Airmen, and died in a 1945 air crash in Atlanta; and Jack had two careers as a postal worker and director of plant operations at Albany State College. He also studied industrial arts at Hampton Institute, electronics at the Milwaukee School of Engineering, and business at Albany State where he received a degree in 1987. In 1950 Jack married Wilhelmina Dye, who had served as an aide to Martin Luther King during the Albany movement and became the first black to serve on the board of the Dougherty County Library. Owing to increasing crime, they moved from their home in the predominantly black middle-class area of the inner city to the largely white middle-class area of northwest Albany. Upward mobility was also evident with their daughter, Denise Hall Winkfield, a Florida A & M graduate and teacher in Germantown, Maryland, and their three grandsons who spent summers in Albany. Kyle, the middle child, is a classic overachiever. A University of Maryland graduate, he runs a financial services firm in Greenbelt, Maryland, but he is also a minister and politician, having run for Congress as a Reaganite Republican. "Kyle resembles his great great grandfather," says Wilhelmina. "He's always into something. I believe that family determines a lot of what route you take in life." The Halls believe that having supportive parents to emulate is critical. They also believe the Tifts, especially Nelson and Maurice Wheeler, served as role models for early members of the Hall family and that being light-

skinned had a lot to do with their family's success. Not only have the entrepreneurial values of the Halls paralleled those of the Tifts, but there may have been an even closer bond. Whether the black Albany Halls and white Albany Tifts are also blood relatives, through the Halls of Oglethorpe, is an interesting question to ponder.[54]

While it is tempting to dismiss the endearing comments of so many Tifts and their black counterparts as insincere or merely interracial game-playing, credible explanations are available that are less demeaning to both parties. Unfortunately most postmodern studies on whiteness, largely theoretical, present-minded, prescriptive, and didactic, are limited. Interpreting racism as rooted in conventional assumptions of whiteness, Thomas Nakayama and Judith Martin see their 1999 volume of essays as part of "the enormous work of challenging and rethinking many of our...ways of thinking that have often played into whiteness." Karyn McKinney concurs that the goal of whiteness studies is "to abolish white privilege" and "we must understand it completely to disarm it effectively." In her 2007 study of black perceptions of whites, Mia Bay assures readers that "African-American discussions of whiteness are embedded within a larger story about black resistance to racism." Even the most historical of such accounts by Grace Elizabeth Hale, by drawing on the kinds of racial stereotypes created by Thomas Dixon, Joel Chandler Harris, and Margaret Mitchell, reveals a present purpose. "When will we try honestly...to create a new commonality? The implication of 'making whiteness,' of course, is that whiteness can be unmade, so that other, more democratic grounds of coherence can be established and lived." Wisely perhaps for a historian, Hale offers no formula for unmaking whiteness.[55]

In *Revealing Whiteness*, philosopher Shannon Sullivan argues that something more than "conscious argumentation against white privilege is needed to combat it." It is by force of habit, based in deep-seated traditions, that such behaviors are learned and transmitted unconsciously through one's environment. Therefore "the hidden, subversive operations of unconscious habits require indirect, roundabout strategies." Combating white solipsism and "changing unconscious habits of white privilege requires altering the... environments that 'feed' them." Sullivan's analysis is drawn largely from the work of French psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche, whose seduction theory explains the process of unconscious habit formation.[56] Undoubtedly these formulations help explain the nature of racism in Southern society during the

Jim Crow era and beyond. Also prevalent in most whiteness studies is an intellectual debt to W. E. B. DuBois. In addition to his own personal observations on the nature of racial prejudice, DuBois was strongly affected by the "new psychology" of Sigmund Freud. He "began to realize that in the fight against race prejudice, we were not facing simply the rational, conscious determination of white folk to oppress us; we were facing age-long complexes sunk now largely to unconscious habit and irrational urge." It was DuBois's "powerful psychoanalytic-pragmatist model" that Sullivan used for "surveying the unconscious operations of white domination."[57] What seems more applicable to the racial reckonings of the Tifts, however, is not so much the confrontational precepts of DuBois but the accommodationist paradigm of his great rival, Booker T. Washington, which stressed achievement through education and self-help and such habits of mind as thrift, patience, and perseverance. As he stated in his celebrated address at the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta in 1895: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."[58] It was Washington's model that was embodied in the founding and growth of Albany Bible and Manual Training Institute during the Joseph Winthrop Holley era. It was also the terms on which most members of the Tift family have engaged their African-American counterparts since the Civil War.

Whiteness studies, while addressing the overt racism of the segregationist South and justifying the Civil Rights struggle, overlook the paternalistic bonds that characterized race relations on another level of encounter. These behaviors, stressing kindness and cooperation, according to Eugene Genovese, were no less rooted in the institution of slavery than cruelty and oppression. "Masters and slaves, whites and blacks, lived as well as worked together. The existence of the community required that all find some measure of self-interest and self-respect. Southern paternalism developed as a way of mediating irreconcilable class and racial conflicts; it was an anomaly even at the moment of its greatest apparent strength." That these behavior patterns persisted long after emancipation, insists Genovese, may be explained in part by the decision of over 80% of blacks (for security or survival) to remain on their plantations and by the prevalence of the same kind of paternalistic relationship between parents and children, and between planters and poorer whites where class was a major determinant. "The paternalistic spirit readily extended beyond the black-white relationship and impinged

upon the relationship of rich to poor whites. As such, it reinforced the paternalism of the master-slave relationship itself. The slaves saw proud, free white men willingly defer to the great and powerful planters." Though criticized for seeming to justify paternalism by recognizing its existence, Genovese was careful never to condone it and always to sympathize with those who suffered most and benefited least from this unequal relationship. "Master and slave had both 'agreed' on the paternalistic basis of their relationship, the one from reasons of self-aggrandizement and the other from lack of an alternative." Still this "special sense of family shaped southern culture. In its positive aspect, it brought white and black together and welded them into one people with genuine elements of affection and intimacy."[59] Contrary to any apparent concession to the kindness principle, Genovese's account deftly dismisses any moral justification to paternalism by stressing the exploitative nature of the system and that blacks, by enduring it, were better strengthened ultimately to resist it.

Susan O'Donovan's *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*, which describes the impact of emancipation in Southwest Georgia, is less subtle about the nature of black/white relations. She states that "slavery, by all accounts of its black survivors, was horrific."[60] Yet O'Donovan does admit that when freed, "home and the lives they had created on the region's plan-tations beckoned to the slaves with an intensity that liberty was hard-pressed to match." Only haltingly does she concede that there existed a class of blacks who chose to cooperate and not resist white hegemony. "As respectful of the rights of capital and as committed to a laissez-faire system as were the white patrons on whom their livelihoods often depended, theirs was a generally middle-class and mainstream position that privileged 'harmonious action and cordial co-operation' over conflict and 'mutual forgiveness' over vengeance." But this group of urbanized and former "free Blacks" bore little resemblance to their plantation brothers and were "all but ignored" by the "majority of black workers," she alleges. When black radicalism, on the other hand, came to ruin with the Camilla massacre in 1868, the insurgency on which O'Donovan's study focuses, would be reduced to "a century-long crawl."[61] No mention is made of paternalism or the kinds of accommodations that many blacks made that were consistent not only with their past condition of servitude under slavery but with the subsequent ideas of Booker T. Washington and such paternalistic white families as the Tifts. It is an account that begs for balance.

That stasis at least persisted for the next century is the assumption on which Jason Sokol's 2006 account, *There Goes My Everything, White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights*, is based. "The defining fact of twentieth-century southern life, a system of racial separation codified in the law and buttressed by everyday behavior, infiltrated the collective subconscious and precluded conscious thought," he asserts. That it was a largely benign form of paternalism and not virulent racism is obvious from the examples cited in Sokol's study. "Paternalism was alive and well" in Selma, Alabama, in 1952, "replete with stereotypes, myths, epithets, and bedrock assumptions of black inferiority." The conviction prevailed that "southern whites knew 'their Negroes' intimately, understood their needs...and fulfilled those needs whenever they could. 'We in the South are the ones in the whole United States who *love* the colored people,'" a woman told a local interviewer. An Albany lumber mill operator assured fellow white Southerners during the Albany movement protest that federal judges "'simply don't know the American Negro as you and I do.' Most concurred that local blacks would be happier if civil rights workers departed. 'The thinking ones...realize they are better off with segregation,'" wrote a Tifton woman. "The others are easily led by agitators."[62] Sokol's book comes closest perhaps of any scholarly account to capturing the spirit of black/white relations in the South as the Civil Rights era unfolded.

No less revealing are the recollections of Hamilton Jordan, who was a teenager in a segregationist Albany family during the protest. To his surprise, he saw his family's housekeeper, Hattie Jackson, "a proud, quiet woman" in her sixties, dressed in her Sunday best among the marchers on Pine Avenue. When she showed up for work on Monday "wearing her crisp white 'maid's' uniform," she hugged Jordan. "Later, I would wonder if that hug was a way of forgiving all of us and Hattie's way of bringing Dr. King's message into our home: I love you even though you have mistreated me and my people."[63] Lee Formwalt, however, talked with a woman who went to high school with Jordan in the early 1960s and recalls him "sitting on the hood of their car laughing and chiding the civil rights marchers."[64]

Another Southwest Georgia perspective comes from the recollections of former President Jimmy Carter, who claimed to understand the plight of black families "because I lived so much among them." Since virtually all of his childhood playmates on the farm were black, "it was only natural for me to consider myself the outsider and to strive to emulate their habits and

language." In a manner not unlike the relationship of the McGough sisters with the family of Mary Frances Dixon and Lucille Fagin, Carter was so close to his best friend, "A. D.," that

> he and his aunt adopted my birthday as his own, so we could share whatever celebrations there might be. ...I was perfectly at ease in his house, and minded his uncle and aunt as though they were my own parents. At least during our younger years, I believe that he felt equally comfortable in our house; he and I didn't think it was anything out of the ordinary in our eating together in the kitchen.

But Carter's most meaningful and lasting relationship was with two older blacks, Rachel Clark and Willis Wright. More so than Jimmy's parents, the former imparted religion and morality, while the latter served as a "patriarchal figure" on the family farm. Together they were "instrumental in teaching me and helping to shape my values and opinions." In this sense their relationship constituted a kind of paternalism in reverse. David Sherman considers Carter's revelations "the very BEST account PERIOD dealing with rural race relations and growing up on a farm" in South Georgia. "He captures so well and accurately, and in vivid detail, the South and the black farming culture I knew on my grandfather M. W. Tift's farm near Leary which was so similar to Plains. ...As he describes the 1930's and 1940's I doubt it had changed from the 1880's and 90's. We were still pumping water with windmills, plowing with mules, and growing peanuts and corn when I grew up and as Carter describes."[65]

Arguably the account that best explains the operative principles of paternalism is neither historical nor autobiographical but sociological, *The Velvet Glove, Paternalism and Conflict in Gender, Class, and Race Relations.* Author Mary Jackman argues that the Marxian model of conflict characterizing most depictions of unequal intergroup relations should be abandoned and makes the case that "neither dominants nor subordinates actively seek open conflict and that hostility is rarely the active ingredient of exploitative relations." Even in modern instances where racial distinctions are less clearly drawn than during days of slavery or Jim Crow, she shows that sweet persuasion is more effective for both parties than confrontation or force. "It is a powerful ideological mold that offers the most efficient and gratifying means for the social control of relationships between unequal groups." In explaining how acceptance of inequalities can be consensual,

free, and spontaneous, Jackman dismisses the kinds of rationalizations that show up in works by Genovese and other class-based authors who dwell on ideological disparities rather than data, try to show "hidden resistance" despite displays of cooperation, and explain away such relationships as "false consciousness." What undermines their reasoning, she argues, is a failure to heed Gunnar Myrdal's dictum that the African American always has "to reckon with the world as it is. He has to accommodate." Rarely, even under harsh conditions, was there a nothing-to-lose mentality. Blacks and whites alike had major investments in the system. "As people grope through the uncertainties of life, they have a tendency to tread carefully: rash moves carry too many risks." Like Marx, Jackman argues, scholars "have been riveted by the potential for conflict and have thus given scant attention to the conservative pressures that more typically prevail in long-term, unequal relationships—pressures that foster harmony or that spare dominant groups from more than a modicum of acrimony." There is always a "continuing dialogue" in which "both sides of unequal relationships have their antenna habitually cocked to the messages coming from the other side."[66] In Jackman's model the forces of attraction are always greater than those of compulsion.

Critical to her argument that love and reasoning are more effective instruments of coercion than hostility and force is the quality of engagement between unequals. In this context sustained intimacy, rather than distal relations, is all important. "It is to the advantage of the dominant group when the structure of the relationship with subordinates dictates intimate contact between them. The more the daily lives of the respective groups are intertwined, the greater and more varied are the opportunities for the dominant group to invade the emotional and cognitive vulnerabilities of their unequals." Unable to resist the affection of their betters, subordinates are pressed into a reciprocal display of warmth that continues as long as recognition of their inequality is adhered to.

> By making love the very instrument of coercion, dominant-group members swathe the unequal exchange with subordinates in the warmth of personal affection even as they hem in subordinates' options with a taut thread.... Individual subordinates are rewarded with love and praise for their fulfillment of specified subordinate traits and compliant behaviors. There is no need to engage in explicit power negotiations with subordinates if one has an embedded ingrained understanding that the continued exchange of affection is contingent upon the fulfillment of specific obligations.[67]

Contrary to the conclusions of most modern historians of black/white relations, there has existed a considerable degree of intimacy between the races, of which generations of Tifts provide merely one example.[68] What is more, the mutually respectful terms in which most of them engaged blacks can claim a firm theoretical basis in the scholarship of Jackman. That others should pursue such a different course likely owes much to their seduction by modern political currents. As a sensitive whiteness scholar, echoing the lessons Herbert Butterfield taught us nearly a century ago, observes: "Historians are cautioned to avoid the vice of 'presentism,' that is, the assignment of motivations for behavior to suit current vogues without proof that those motivations actually figured in the needs and feelings of the people of the historic period under consideration."[69] That so many Tifts, however prejudiced, enjoyed functional relations with so many African Americans suggests that other Southern families must have had similar encounters.

Ultimately, however, the kind of racial bonding that was so evident between the fourth and sixth generations of Tifts is rooted, as Randall Miller shows, in the institution of slavery.

> The lives of black and white—slave and master—were inexorably bound up with one another in that peculiar symbiosis that was the antebellum South. By proximity and necessity they worked together, they sometimes prayed together, they sometimes played together, and they even slept together. Violently, yet even lovingly, their lives intersected in countless complex ways.

But "paternalistic sympathies warred with crass exploitation of labor" is the conclusion of James Roark in his study that extends into the postbellum South.[70] Such complexities and contradictions were possible only in an environment where there was constant interaction between the races.

Though no longer slaves, virtually all blacks with whom the later Tifts came into contact were employed in a servile capacity. Gestures of goodwill and politeness can readily be explained as attempts to preserve the status quo of this unequal relationship where both races coexisted in relative peace. As long as the color line was preserved, it was vitally important not to rock the boat. However much caring and love may have existed between the Tifts and their black associates, their continued compatibility depended on the former's control of the power structure. Another factor for the Tifts was their Yankee origin. The society from which they came (and continued to visit)

recognized no formal boundaries based on skin color. Promoting racial harmony can be viewed, along with their puritan work ethic, business interests, and education as yet another example of values derived from their native New England. Already secure and prominent within the white community of the South, the functional option of cooperation rather than confrontation with the black community had a strong appeal to the practical frame of mind of the Tifts. They simply applied the same skills of accommodation acquired over several generations in ingratiating themselves with whites in Georgia to their relationships with African Americans. This approach also fit an erstwhile family trait of acting out Yankee ways under a veil of Southerness.

8

Ties That Loose and Bind

> It is the fate of the Southerner to be involved in his region, always to feel himself held by it.[1] —Ralph McGill

Traditionally Southerners are renowned for their strong regional identification, leading Albert Bushnell Hart to observe in 1912 that a Southern migrant to the North "continues to feel himself Southern to the end of his days." The Northerner coming South, on the other hand, "tries to identify himself completely with the community in which he means to stay." Some even wished to "hide their origin."[2] Whether the Tifts were able to sustain their Georgia identity into the twenty-first century is difficult to determine inasmuch as the story for the most recent generations is incomplete. Most evident, however, is a tendency in both branches of the family to move beyond their Georgia roots to other parts of the region, country, and world. Mystic memories have long since faded, family ties there no longer exist, and pilgrimages to New England are infrequent. Additionally relocation, marriage, and associations outside family circles have weakened the bonds Tift ancestors fostered with South Georgia. More than any other factor, education opened the way for diverse opportunities and an ensuing diaspora of the seventh and eighth generations. Given the increased cultural homogeneity of modern America, such changes were inevitable. Despite these diluting influences, there persists a strong attachment to Southern ways, a potent underlying drive that can be traced to Northern origins, and a tendency for civic engagement and leadership.

Mike Brumby, great-grandson of Henry Harding Tift, exhibits as well as any member of the family this mixture of characteristics and the importance of education. Born in 1942 in Marietta, Mike graduated from Washington and Lee, received a master's degree from Vanderbilt, and studied in Germany on a Fulbright-Hays grant. After serving in Vietnam, he taught German and history at Westminster Schools, Atlanta's premier private academy. Then, accompanied by his wife, Margaret Dimon (Moppy), he attended graduate

school in Mexico. But when his father, Richard Brumby, was in an airplane accident in 1976, he returned to Georgia to manage family properties (including 1,300 acres of timber) in Tifton. While staying in one of his mother's houses and attending classes in forest management at ABAC, Mike and Moppy decided that Tifton would be an ideal place to raise a family. Mike explains that he had fond memories of hunting and fishing in South Georgia as a child, his father had business interests in Tifton, and his cousin, Homer Rankin, was the newspaper editor. "It wasn't as if we walked out of the woods when we came to Tifton. It was a natural transition." Mike admits that he is "compulsive about education," and the Tifton public schools could not meet his expectations. After receiving instruction at the Bette Bably Institute in Philadelphia, the Brumbys home-schooled their children, Virginia (born 1978) and Henry Harding Tift Brumby (born 1982). Both eventually had perfect scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, a rare feat for any student, not to mention two in the same family.[3]

In keeping with tradition, Mike exhibits a sense of stewardship by sharing his family's educational values with the community. His career developed serendipitously. Mike realized that virtually no tennis instruction was being offered in Tifton, and shortly after arriving he got a call from his Uncle Tommy's secretary, whose son needed lessons. Soon he was teaching other kids, including members of the local tennis team, and his talents were much in demand. He and Moppy then bought a house north of the city from Tommy, Sr. on which they constructed tennis courts for private instruction and utilized an additional forty acres for Christmas trees—the Brumby farm. Neither of these enterprises are high-income producers, but Mike was never much interested in "making a living and getting rich."[4] That was more a trait of earlier Tifts.

The Brumbys' lives center on tennis, but there is another way in which they filled a local void. In 1989 they founded the Tift County Foundation for Educational Excellence, which over the next fifteen years, with over 900 patrons, raised and invested $500,000 in grants, projects, and teacher recognition. Since 1991 ten public school teachers a year have been tapped for teaching awards, which includes a $250 check and plaque awarded at a banquet sponsored by the Rotary Club.[5] Additionally the foundation established six endowed chairs in language, arts, science, reading, humanities, and journalism, and since 1990 it has provided 400 grants totaling $257,811 for area teachers to put their best ideas into practice. But the foundation's

most ambitious project (1997–2000) was an accelerated reader program, administered by a Wisconsin company, to make Tifton "The Reading Capital of the World." It enabled readers to earn points by reading books and taking computer tests on them. According to Mike, "reading is not part of the curriculum, it *is* the curriculum." At one school, where kids from the city's poorest families could hardly read a stop sign, the participation was 100%, and its 392 students accumulated twice as many points as its rivals. National media, including NBC, CBS, and CNN, converged on Tifton with colorful and positive coverage, noting increases of 14% in national test scores and 130% in library circulation.[6] *Time* reported that

> a big banner went up outside the town library, with weekly updates on the number of books read. The goal? One million. Everyone but the students thought Brumby was whacked. If you're a parent, you can relate to the shock Tifton parents felt when, without threats, leg shackles, the smashing of TVs or the withholding of video-game privileges, their children began reading books before, during and after school. "It got to where you had to say, 'No more books,'" says Lenell Lindsey, a second-grade teacher at Lastinger Elementary. "You had to say, 'There's more to school than reading books all the time.'"[7]

On reaching the million-book goal, 7,500 people (21% of the county) jammed the high school stadium in November 2000 to celebrate, and a billboard reading "Welcome to Tifton, Reading Capital of the World" graced nearby I-75. To continue the momentum, the foundation established thirty-nine book nooks around the city to offer citizens an opportunity to "read while you wait," and initiated a pilot program to tackle the larger problem of illiteracy in a county where 31% of the residents were unable to read, write, or perform simple math functions. Meanwhile the accelerated reader program topped two million books in December 2003. By 2006 it was two and a half million. "The Brumbys are achievement-oriented in everything they do" is the view of Tifton's mayor.[8] Though lacking the financial resources of his illustrious great-grandfather, Mike Brumby used his Yankee-rooted energy and imagination to serve the community.

Family members of Mike's uncle, Henry Harding Tift III, also exhibit strong educational values, but their careers have extended far beyond Tifton. Henry and Christine's eldest son, Henry IV, was born in 1943 in Philadelphia and graduated from Westminster Schools and Yale where he

played on the (nationally-ranked) golf team and graduated with an English degree in 1965. He later received a master's from Florida State. In the meantime, Henry had met Ann Marie Brown, daughter of a Missouri congressman, on a trip to Europe on the *Queen Mary*. Ann attended Smith College and recalls that Henry's worldview still reflected the conservatism of his native South. During a speech at Smith where President John Kennedy was promoting the newly founded Peace Corps, there were antiwar protestors. Henry joined a rival group protesting the protestors and delivered a petition to Kennedy. After their marriage in 1965, Henry and Ann spent two years in the Peace Corps in Colombia. He then taught English at Stony Brook School on Long Island for eight years, but his heart was never there. Ann always "knew he would come back South. He was a homing pigeon and hated cold weather." Henry had visited Mystic several times as a child and his father encouraged him to visit relatives there when he was at Yale, but he never made any connections.[9]

With Ann and three daughters, Henry returned to Macon in 1975 to teach at Stratford Academy, the city's premier private school, where a fellow teacher at Stony Brook, Ralph Gillette, was hired as headmaster. Gillette, however, was "very Northern" and upset Southern sensibilities. Confrontational and with a daughter who dated blacks, he did not last very long. So Henry succeeded him at age thirty-four. "He was very young," Ann recalls, "and it was awkward at first. He was strong on academics but also keen about athletics. He was so beautifully educated at Yale. Henry led by shutting up rather than speaking up. Leading by listening" was his approach. He "never said more than he had to say," and his style was to go to the heart of the matter. What contributed most to Henry's success as headmaster over two decades, however, was his optimism, vitality, and imagination, attributes he acquired from his parents. During his tenure Stratford grew in size and quality and moved to a new campus in north Macon. It was therefore a shock when Henry died suddenly in June 1997, the result of a lingering hepatitis infection he had acquired in a Barranquilla hospital while in the Peace Corps. According to his sister-in-law, Carol, Henry was such a "high energy person," and his death was "devastating and really drew the family together." Henry left a strong educational legacy. Ann remained an English teacher and guidance counselor at Stratford, where all of their four children graduated before attending colleges in the North. Although some of them renewed family contacts with New England, none seemed inclined to return

to Tifton. As a postscript to their Yankee connections, Ann recalls a meeting of women city leaders in the 1970s when someone noted how many of the eighteen present had attended the seven sisters—Smith, Radcliff, Vassar, Barnard, Mount Holyoke, Pembroke, Bryn Mawr, and Wellesley. Jokes about a "Northern invasion" ensued, with little awareness that this phenomenon had been going on in Georgia for at least a century and a half.[10]

The family of William Lee Tift, Henry IV's brother, shows the same diasporic tendencies. Born in 1945 in Montgomery, Alabama, William attended Westminster Schools, then obtained a history of music degree from Yale and a medical degree from Johns Hopkins University. He explains that he went to Yale because his brother was there and education was important in the family. Henry III sent him to Westminster because of its "high standards," and Bill's mother Tinky, a graduate of Goucher College (Maryland), was no less keen on education. Bill met his wife Sharon (Follette), then a student at Skidmore College (New York), while on spring break in Palm Beach. After their marriage in 1967, she helped him through medical school, and they lived in various locations outside the South, including London. Their decision to move to Macon owed mainly to family and Bill's desire to do practical care for children. Sherry said that he had "worked her down the east coast enough, so it wasn't that much of a shock to settle in the Deep South. She claims northern heritage but has a better Southern accent than I do," he admits. "She has adapted very well to Georgia." Bill considers himself Southern, but only in a geographical sense. He has visited Mystic several times with his father and children and had additional exposure when at Yale. These Tifts feel as "attached to New England as here," and every summer they rent a place on Martha's Vineyard. From his education and cosmopolitan experiences, Bill feels "more American than Southern," and like his siblings professes a liberal outlook. Contrary to their early religious training, none of them ended up as Southern Baptists, and Bill sold the farm, mostly timberland, that he inherited in Tifton. The three children of Bill and Sherry also seem torn between two cultures. When asked about his Tift heritage, Bill says that he values it much, but he has always found it difficult to carve out his own identity because his father was such a revered figure in the community.[11]

His younger brother, Jerome Pound Tift, also "worshipped" his dad and followed him into medicine. Born in 1949 in Macon, Jerry graduated from Vanderbilt in 1971 and Duke University Medical School in 1975. In 1973 he married Carol Breeden Patton of Bennetsville, South Carolina, a physical therapy student at Duke. After living in Los Angeles, Chapel Hill, and Birmingham, the Tifts returned in 1986 to Macon where Jerry is on the Mercer medical school faculty. He describes himself as a "homeboy," and for Carol moving back was "wonderful because we were able to reestablish our Tift ties." Like his brother, Jerry has fond memories of visiting Mystic, especially during his father's 25th Harvard reunion in 1963. But he also values his Tifton roots, which include not only his inheritance of 300 acres but another 300 acres he bought from Bill. Mike Brumby manages his property and rents some out to hunters, but the government also pays him not to farm it. Jerry likes the land chiefly "because of its Tift connection. Being a Tift has always been important to me. I like it that I was born into this family. There have always been strong family ties." Unlike Bill, Jerry feels "very Southern. But I'm not as Southern as I was before I went off to school." For Jerry, one's identity is defined not so much by geography as by "who your family is. I'm a Southerner because I'm a Tift, a Lee, a Cole, and a Pound." Even the family's pet African Gray parrott, "Amos," exemplifies the tradition. The Tifts have been "very intact and cohesive," according to Carol. Some Tifts "aspire to more social standing than others, but there has always been lots of humor and minimal bickering." Equally evident has been a strong Southern, even South Georgia, base, notwithstanding links and larger sympathies with the outside world, including Mystic. Despite strong associations with his Southern roots, Jerry always wanted his three children to "get out of Georgia."[12]

His younger brother, Thomas Nelson Tift (named for Albany's founder), was born in 1951 and graduated from Vanderbilt in 1973. In 1979 he obtained a Ph.D. in theater from the University of Illinois and taught at Tift College for five years. Following his marriage to Jana Shrum of Port Arthur, Texas, in 1983, Thomas worked for an insurance company in New York City, taught at Louisiana College in Pineville, and co-directed Personal Development Inc., which taught time management and listening skills. Since 1996 he has been living in Boca Raton, Florida, where he is an associate pastor at the First United Methodist Church, and Jana is a freelance theater director. Although Thomas still owns the 300 acres he inherited in Tifton

and considers the Tifts an "amazing family" with a remarkable heritage, he has no intention of leaving the Northernized environs of South Florida to rediscover his Georgia roots. "I consider myself a Southerner in the same sense that my wife will always consider herself a Texan. We're very happy in Boca Raton, but I don't consider myself a Floridian. I think of myself as a citizen of the world but a product of the South."[13]

The offspring of Catherine Tift Porter and her husband James have also valued education and ventured beyond the state. Catherine Tift Porter (born 1946) graduated from Sweet Briar College and married her high-school sweetheart, Taylor Branch. While he was in graduate school at Princeton, they shared an apartment with Bill and Hilary Clinton, then Yale law students, in Texas. Both couples were engaged in the Civil Rights campaign, trying to register voters. Taylor eventually wrote a trilogy of books on the movement, one of which, *Parting the Waters*, won a Pulitzer Prize. After their divorce, Catherine graduated from Georgetown Law School and held various legal posts, including one with the House Ways and Means Committee and another with Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island. She later married James T. Fuller III of Selma, Alabama. Pattie Winston Porter (born 1950) graduated from Mount Holyoke College and became an art history teacher at St. Agnes School in Alexandria, Virginia. She married Charles Morton Firestone, scion of a Jewish family from St. Louis. He graduated from Duke Law School, practiced law with a consumer advocacy group in Washington, and tried two cases before the Supreme Court. When he became director of communications law at UCLA, Pattie started and directed a community art program in Los Angeles.[14]

James Tinsley Porter, Jr. (born 1952) graduated from Vanderbilt, earned a master's degree in management from Georgia Tech, and runs a recycling business in Atlanta. His wife, Celeste (Burdell), is a graphic artist. Thomas Tift Porter (born 1956) had behavioral problems as a youth. He attended Westminster and other schools, according to his mother, "but never graduated from anything. Yet he understands how to make money better than anyone in the family." Thomas became an oil jobber. He owns Gilreath Oil Company, which buys cut-rate oil and distributes it with his own fleet of trucks. He also manages the Porter Carpet Mill property in Cartersville and has married into money. The father of his wife, Mary Helen, was a lawyer with King and Spalding, whose main clients were Coca-Cola and SunTrust Bank. The youngest child of the Porters, Russell Tift Porter (born 1966),

graduated from Rhodes College and did graduate study at Johns Hopkins. After working as a Washington stockbroker, he joined Senator Sam Nunn's staff for five years, then took a position with the Agency for International Development, which entailed assignments to South America. Russell's wife, Beth (Sanner), a North Dakotan and graduate of American University, works for the State Department.[15] The offspring of Catherine and James Porter display a familiar pattern, characteristic of later Tifts. Just as the Macon branch used Stratford Academy, the Atlanta branch used Westminster Schools to propel their children to prominent universities and high-profile positions. Only two of their children remain in Georgia.

Tommy Tift's children have remained close to home. The eldest son with his first wife Clair (Hardwick) is Thomas Willingham Tift III. He was born in 1956 and graduated from Washington and Lee. Though based in Atlanta, Tommy heads a business called Health America Group that buys, sells, and manages medical offices, mainly in Texas and California. Richard Hardwick Tift (born 1958) had adjustment problems, possibly from Tommy trying to make him right-handed when he was a south paw. He earned a management degree from Georgia Tech, but partied too much. Now a cured alcoholic, he lives in Ponte Vedra and manages real estate with his father in Tifton and Florida. Caroline Shivers Tift (born 1962) graduated from Vanderbilt in mathematics and taught in Atlanta before becoming a homemaker. She is married to George Lowndes Harrison of Atlanta. All of Tommy's offspring are culturally attuned to the South.[16]

Tommy, however, was called upon to fill another paternal role by overseeing the institution in Forsyth that his grandparents had nurtured in the early 1900s. Although few family members attended Tift College over the next century, they remained sentimentally attached and served on its board of trustees.[17] But an increase of coeducational colleges, societal changes in the role of women, a de-emphasis on liberal arts education, and the proliferation of low-cost state institutions in the 1960s placed Tift in jeopardy. While Tommy was chairman of the board of trustees in the early 1980s, the college seemed able to weather these adverse trends. He recalls "the school was not in trouble financially" and was better off than Mercer University. During the presidency of Dr. Carey T. Vinzant (1952–1969), Tift had experienced its period of greatest growth, from 261 to 648 students and from $1.5 million to $5 million in capital assets. But Tommy's term was only five years, and two years after he went off the board (1986) the trustees

decided to merge with Mercer, then to close Tift. Tommy's regrets transcend family pride. "Tift had a great heritage and wanted a woman president. ...The trustees would not accept a woman." The professor they selected as president "turned around and sold it to Mercer." Tommy's cousin, Thomas Nelson Tift, agrees that "the end of Tift was more a case of murder than dying. It was spread too thin over branch campuses, and the trustees got worried that Tift couldn't make it as a small liberal arts women's college."[18] But alumni association directors concurred with Mercer trustees, citing low bank balances and declining enrollments.[19] Tift College held its last Forsyth graduation in 1992.

Facilitating the merger was a shared Baptist tradition and Mercer's determination to preserve the Tift concept by renaming its education program the Tift College of Education. The Tift endowment provided partial tuition for female honor students designated as Tift Scholars and established a Tift House on campus for special events. About seventy-five new scholars are selected yearly on the basis of grades, test scores, and interviews. Program director Erin Lones notes that they are not just looking for academic distinction, community involvement, spirituality, and leadership. "Women at Tift were taught that they could accomplish anything they want to, and that is the kind of girl we're looking for." Activities are minimal, according to Katie Blackburn, a 2004 Tift Scholar in environmental science. Her first meeting consisted of a background talk on the Tifts and the institution. Other meetings dealt with manners, the college coat of arms, and job interviewing. There were also guest speakers, an academic recognition dinner, and a holiday tea. Graduating seniors receive a medal and are entitled to ring the old Tift College bell on the front lawn on alumni day, not allowing the bell to stop. "They try to make a big deal out of it," says Katie. Indeed a major purpose of the program, admits Lones, is to "show Tift alumni that we are interested in the traditions of Tift and that there is a valid reason for supporting Mercer." Still "some Tift grads are very bitter, perhaps as many as 50%," and some, calling themselves the "old order," would even meet in Forsyth on Mercer alumni weekend to thumb their noses. On a more positive note, Lones observes that there might be more Tift Scholars now, about 200, than there were students at Tift College in its latter days.[20]

None of the Tift family, aside from Bessie, ever attended Tift. The offspring of Lutrelle and Homer Rankin include three (elder) adopted and five (younger) natural children. Lutrelle Tift Rankin II (Princess) was born in

1947 and married Joel Quinn, grandson of Macon writer Harry Stillman Edwards. She earned a business degree from ABAC and has worked as a caterer and accountant. Both of her sons live in Georgia. Royal Forbes Rankin (born 1948) graduated from Georgia Tech and became an architect in Tifton. His firm has designed many churches in the Southeast and did a lot of work on the Agrirama, Tifton's living history museum. Its director, John Johnson, calls Roy "unique. They broke the mold when they made Roy." He married Debra Conner, who works for a local judge. Anne Lebby Rankin (born 1948) became head of the Professional Golfers Association Office in Jacksonville. After three marriages, she lives in Tifton and assists a friend who has multiple sclerosis. Few of the adopted offspring of Weetie and Homer have strayed far from the family nest.[21]

Likewise virtually none of their younger siblings have ventured into Yankeeland. Lyn Rankin (born 1949) received a nursing degree from ABAC and works in a dialysis clinic in Albany. Her husband, Gordon Pate of Cordele, was killed in an auto accident. Thomas Lebby Rankin (born 1950) earned a journalism degree from UGA and owns Tom Rankin Advertising in Tifton. His wife Susan comes from Thomasville and works for Affinity Health Group. Meade McLennan Rankin (born 1953) also studied journalism at UGA and worked initially for newspapers in Gwinnett County. He married Crystal Raines of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, where he resides and works at Wachovia Bank Mortgage. Shine Rankin (born 1955) married Florence Ridgdill, editor of the *Tifton Gazette*. She is a good journalist, according to Princess, with "an outstanding but wicked sense of humor." John Duncan Rankin (born 1959) graduated from Westminster Schools and Auburn University, the only child of Weetie and Homer who did not attend Tifton High School. He is a forester and lives in Seale, Alabama, with his wife, Karen, a native of Tifton and director of outreach at Auburn. Weetie reckons she has forty-one children and grandchildren, a record perhaps for latter-day Tifts. Though aware of being the granddaughter of a Connecticut Yankee, she loves the lifestyle of rural South Georgia. "In big cities nobody knows or cares who you are. I'm Georgia born and Georgia bred, and when I die I'll be Georgia dead."[22]

She also has two deceased brothers. Amos Chapman Tift, Jr. (Bud) was born in 1921, and after graduating from Georgia Tech returned to Tifton to take over his family's oil distribution trade. Like his father, he had a good heart but little business sense, and his debt-ridden company went bankrupt. Bud and his wife Doris (Purvis) had four children. Amos Chapman Tift III (Chappie) was born in 1948 and was strongly influenced by his grandmother Lutrelle. "She wanted me to succeed," says Chappie, "and did everything to ensure I did. She was stern and made us attend church every Sunday and learn good Southern manners." Chappie, after graduating from ABAC, avoided the family business and became a research technician for Pioneer Seed and then a professional home inspector. He and his wife Serita (Chancey) were married in 1974 and have two children. Their son, Amos IV, was once likened by T. W. Tift, Sr. to his father, H. H. Tift.[23] Homer Rankin Tift (born 1950) takes care of homebound elderly with his wife Linda and works part-time at Agrirama. Cecelia Tift (born 1955) works in hospital administration and is married to John Dale Sumner, a broker for Caldwell Banker in Tifton. These Tifts have stayed close to home.

The family's seafaring tradition was continued by David Harding Tift, Weetie's younger brother, who was born in 1923. He attended UGA, but the war intervened, and he became a deep-sea diver for the Navy. "He was a magnificent man," according to Weetie, "about 6' 2" and very handsome. David was also a dare devil who sailed on the Murmansk run from England and ended up repairing ships in the South Pacific. After the war he continued diving in New Orleans and married Marie Mires, a "gorgeous female" from Nashville. She was "very talented and articulate," says Chappie, "but not all there." Dathan, their oldest son, explains that she suffered from schizophrenia. Both parents had tragic endings after separate auto accidents in Louisiana. Born in 1953, Dathan is a licensed insurance agent in Jonesboro. Although being a Tift might not mean much in Atlanta or New Orleans, admits Dathan, "I'm proud of my history and my name. It's nice to have some history to your name."[24]

So prominent did the Tift name become that it was appropriated by other families. Though lacking consanguinity, Marguerite Myers Miller and her younger brother, Henry Tift Myers, were no less deeply attached to Tifton and its founders. Their mother, Pearl Willingham, was the youngest sister of Bessie Tift, at whose house Marguerite spent many summers as a child. Their father was Irvine Myers, who came to Tifton in his teens to

work as a clerk at the old Sadie Hotel. In 1899 he bought the hotel and made some additions, but it was destroyed by fire in 1905 with a $28,500 loss. Undaunted, Myers constructed a new one called the Myon (from *My*ers and Tift*on*) in 1906 at a cost of $85,000. According to his daughter, who grew up in it, the Myon was "one of the most fabulous hotels in this part of the country," with sixty bedrooms, forty bathrooms, steam heat, and hot and cold running water in each room.[25]

It was the exploits of her brother, however, bearing the name of Tifton's patriarch, who raised recognition of the Georgia Tifts to unprecedented heights and took it to the four corners of the earth as the nation's first presidential pilot. Like Marguerite, Henry Tift Myers was raised in the Myon, but he started following barnstormers as a child and learned how to fly from them. After serving a stint in the Army Air Corps, he worked for American Airlines in the 1930s. At the outset of World War II, General Harold George, head of Air Transport Command, tapped Myers for special duties. Over the next decade, as presidential pilot he accumulated 4,500 flying hours, made the first non-stop flights from Washington to Paris and London, and became the first aviator to circle the globe at the equator.[26] His passengers included not only Franklin Roosevelt (whom he flew to Yalta) and Harry Truman, but Herbert Hoover, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, Dwight Eisenhower, Bernard Baruch, and the kings of Britain and Greece. President Truman, whom he transported in the DC-4 "Sacred Cow" (precursor to Air Force One), was Myers's best passenger. Truman was so considerate that he took a train to the Army-Navy game in 1945 so that his pilot could take the day off to marry Maidee Williams in Fort Worth. Myers's least favorite passenger was Madame Chiang Kai-shek, who treated him like "a two bit chauffeur" on a flight from Rio de Janeiro. In the course of his travels he witnessed General Eisenhower's triumphal return to Washington in 1945, the liberation of Paris and Rome, and Princess Elizabeth's wedding in London in 1947, and by mistake, he encountered three of Stalin's doubles in a dark basement in Russia.[27]

Myers's most extensive mission was his flight of five senators, including Richard Russell, on a 45,000-mile tour of war zones in 1943. Afterwards Russell declared that Henry had "the greatest crew in our Army" and that Myers "could take a plane anywhere." Although Henry flew millions of miles without a mishap, he once came within seconds of crashing with Margaret Truman, the president's daughter, on board. Probably the best

anecdote, from his *New York Times* obituary, concerns Churchill on a flight from Ottawa to Washington in a DC-4. The Prime Minister

> roamed to the cabin, cocktail glass in hand and announced he would like to pilot the ship.
>
> "I've flown many of these," he told Colonel Myers. "In the Royal Air Force they're called Dakotas."
>
> The Prime Minister took the controls, leaving one hand free to drink his cocktail and gesture as he talked. The plane went on a wildly eccentric course, but the British leader did not notice. Colonel Myers did, however, and unobtrusively put the plane on automatic pilot.
>
> Churchill didn't notice that either, but when he arrived in Washington, he told President Roosevelt, "Fortunately, I could navigate the Dakota for your lads; otherwise we would have been late."

Most memorable about Roosevelt was his love of travel and relaxed demeanor. "I'm in no hurry," he told Myers. "The sooner I get there the sooner a lot of people will be wanting something from me," he quipped.[28] When Henry died in Fort Worth in 1968 of a heart attack, he had been gone from Tifton for over four decades, but he never forgot his roots. Not only was his son named Henry Tift Myers, Jr., but his funeral included Richard Brumby and Amos Chapman Tift, Jr. as pallbearers, and Henry Harding Tift III and Tommy Tift, Jr. as honorary pallbearers. His final resting place in Tifton was near the airport that memorialized his name.[29]

While most Tifton Tifts have retained close links to the South, it is not surprising that the descendants of Union veteran Orville Tift, who married a Mystic Mallory and whose daughter married a Pennsylvanian, should abandon their Georgia roots. Katherine Tift-Jones's son also married a Northerner, and their son, Frederick Herr Jones III, born in 1938 in Chicago, graduated from the University of Kansas with a business degree. He has been employed with Owens Corning and Mobil Oil and runs his own glass business in Charlestown, Indiana, where he lives with his wife LaRita, a native of Ohio. His twin daughters from a previous marriage attended non-Southern colleges and live in Dallas. Although Fred is interested in his noted grandmother and curious about his Georgia and Mystic forebears, neither he nor his daughters retain a trace of Southern culture.[30]

It was only when the business plans of Orville's brother, Edmund Tift, did not materialize in New York City that he sought opportunities in Tifton. Still his marriage in 1879 to Kittie Ransom of Mystic and the presence of his parents and other family members there ensured a continued commitment to New England. What is more, the role of Edmund and Kittie in the founding of Tifton's Episcopal Church (a somewhat alien religion in South Georgia), their frequent trips to Europe, and Kittie's cultural interests set them apart from other Tiftonians. Eventually Kittie and Edmund moved to Boston in 1912. According to granddaughter Betty Skinner, they returned to New England because Kittie was "such an intellectual" and "Tifton was never civilized enough." Edmund died in 1917, but Kittie stayed in Boston until 1943 when, at age eighty-five, she broke her hip and moved to Jacksonville, Florida, to be with her daughter. While Edmund was buried with his family at Mystic in Elm Grove Cemetery, Kittie was laid to rest at Jacksonville's Oaklawn Cemetery, but "she never became Southernized."[31]

Their only child, Katherine Louise (Cassie), was also caught up in this cross-cultural confusion. Born in Mystic (1883), she died in Jacksonville (1975), was raised "by a very Yankee mother," and studied violin at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. What drew her to the South and determined the trajectory of Edmund's descendants was Cassie's childhood in Tifton and marriage to Edwin Henry Bacon, Jr. His father, E. H. Bacon, a local physician, had married Sarah Jane Willingham, Bessie Tift's older sister. Cassie and Edwin met as playmates when they visited their aunt Bessie. It was, in a sense, a mixed marriage. A local newspaper report in April 1910 called their wedding "one of the most noteworthy of Tifton's history." It was conducted in the First Baptist Church of Tifton by the Episcopalian pastor of Albany. Katherine was exposed not only to the Southern influence of the Willinghams, but also to the Bacons, whose antecedents migrated from Massachusetts to Georgia by the mid-eighteenth century.[32] Edwin graduated from Georgia Tech, worked as a textile engineer in New York, and lived in England and Massachusetts, but he did not share the cosmopolitan tastes of his Ransom/Tift in-laws. "Daddy was a pure Southerner," remarks Betty Skinner, "and wanted to come South." In 1917 Henry Tift gave him a loan to start a Hudson and Stutz-Bearcat dealership in Jacksonville, which did well until the Depression. Edwin's involvement in the Rotary Club and civic affairs revealed his desire to fit into his new community, and his affiliation with the Baptist church rather than the Episcopal congregation of Katherine's

family indicated his cultural leanings. After a life of cross-cultural influences, Katherine resigned herself to a neutral position, stating, "I stick up for the Yankees when anybody complains about them and for Southerners when anyone complains about them." She became "pretty bi-partisan" with friends both in the North and South, but decidedly the scales were tipped towards the latter where she was eventually laid to rest.[33]

Katherine and Edwin had three daughters. Dorothy, born in 1914, moved to California and remained single, but she died in Jacksonville. Katherine, the middle child, married a Southerner and settled in East Tennessee. But it was Sarah Elizabeth (Betty), born in Jacksonville and educated at Agnes Scott College for two years, who most fulfilled the family's Southern identity, especially through her marriage to William (Billy) Skinner in 1943. Billy's grandfather came from Georgetown, South Carolina, to the barrens of South Georgia where he established a turpentine still at Fargo near the Suwannee River. In 1899 the family moved to Jacksonville and acquired forty-seven square miles of land in North Florida, which was utilized for turpentine production, timber farming (with a sawmill), and cattle grazing. Billy's father, Samuel Skinner, who had only 500 acres of it, pursued another course by starting Skinner's Dairy in 1922, destined to become a mainstay of the Jacksonville business community. After Billy returned from service in World War II, he and his two brothers took over the dairy with each directing a separate function—farming, processing, and marketing. In 1984 they sold the operation. By this time Betty, despite her mixed cultural heritage, going back to her grandfather, could claim to be "very Southern. Can't you tell!"[34]

William Skinner, Jr. (born 1944), eldest son of Betty and Billy, graduated from Davidson College and married Elizabeth Harris in 1966. After serving as a Navy pilot in the Vietnam War, he graduated from Harvard Business School and returned to the South and became chief financial officer for Garen Homes in Suwanee, Georgia. Elizabeth is a family counselor in Buford. Lella Skinner (born 1947) earned a sociology degree from the University of North Florida. She has lived in North Carolina, New Jersey, and California and worked in computer software, insurance, and a women's ministry before returning to Jacksonville to become an accountant. Dorothy Bacon Skinner (born 1951) holds degrees from Hollins College and FSU. She inherited a recessive gene for Wilson's Disease (a liver affliction) from both parents. In 1977 she married Ingo Krieg, a German immigrant,

and joined his dairy business, which, until its closure in 2006, was the last independent dairy in Duval County, Florida. Sarah Tift Skinner (born 1954) graduated from Hollins and earned a doctorate in veterinary medicine from UGA in 1985. On returning to Jacksonville, she worked in a small animal practice until 1996, then started a mobile house call service.[35]

Betty Skinner's elder sister Katherine, born in Massachusetts in 1917, implanted a line of Tifts in Tennessee. Upon receiving a master's degree from the University of Tennessee (UT), she married Charles Hultquist, an industrial engineer with the Aluminum Company of America, in 1942 and settled in Maryville where they raised three children. Katherine Ann (born 1946) graduated from UT and in 1973 married James Overholser. They live in Roanoke, Virginia, where he works for the Norfolk-Southern Railway. Charles Bacon Hultquist (born 1949) earned bachelor's and master's degrees from FSU and in 1972 married Teri Bowling, whom he had met in the Air Force. Charles works in Oak Ridge as an emergency management trainer and runs Special Olympics events worldwide.[36] These descendants of Edmund Tift, albeit non-Georgians, seem as reconciled to the South and its traditions as their cousins in Jacksonville.

On the Albany side the family tendency to fulfill educational goals and test the waters beyond South Georgia is less pronounced. Tragedy, of course, struck the family of Maurice Wheeler Tift, but his older son Asa lived long enough to marry (Vera Inman) and father a son, named Asa, born in 1924. He attended Emory University but was inclined towards technology (photography and ham radio) rather than academics. After serving in the Navy in World War II, Asa first worked for WGPC (World's Greatest Pecan Center) radio in Albany, then became a radio repair specialist at the local Marine Corps logistics center. In 1956 he married Jeanette Vandiviere, a neighbor and school classmate who also knew Julia Oliver. She graduated from Mercer University and worked for the state health department in Albany. "I never knew anyone smarter than my husband," she says. "He read all the time and was very well-informed." Asa never visited Mystic, but Jeanette and her younger son did after his death in 1984. Neither her husband nor sons "had any feeling for Mystic. They always felt they were Southerners and Georgians." Asa did feel pride in being a Tift, though he never bragged about it.[37]

Despite his thirty-year residence in Northern Virginia, David Sherman cherishes his Southern roots and remains solicitous of his family and hometown history. It stems in part from his background in preservation, having served as a member of the board of curators of the Georgia Historical Society, a founding member of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, and the state's historic preservation officer in the 1970s. Especially disconcerting to him has been the lack of respect by Albany officials for the city's historical sites. As heirs of properties in the Sandy Bottom section of North Washington Street that have been in the Tift family since 1837, David and his stepbrother have been frustrated in trying to persuade city officials to improve facilities that would enable them to restore the buildings on these sites. As David points out, this area was once "the transportation and shipping hub of southwest Georgia, with 7 railroads serving Albany." Although a tornado devastated downtown Albany in 1940, this district thrived until railroads declined in the 1950s. Then in the wake of the Civil Rights protests of the 1960s, businesses increasingly relocated to northwest Albany, which offered better shopping and access for semi-trailer trucks. Concurrently the city secured and razed almost all other structures on the block to make way for a parking lot, the city/county courthouse, and the fire department headquarters. Later Mayor James Gray led efforts to tear down all but one building in the central business block. By the mid-1980s the conversion of downtown Albany from business to government was complete.[38]

What Sherman proposed was a restoration of the Washington Street properties to their 1880s appearance to serve as small shops. Not only would it help revive downtown business, but it would attract tourists to other historic sites within walking distance, including those operated by the Thronateeska Heritage Center. Neither elected city officials nor the city manager seemed willing to place utility lines underground, replace broken concrete sidewalks with brick, install historically compatible lampposts, or move the dray line on the adjacent lot to another location. "The city has been one of the worst custodians of the local heritage," Sherman concludes. "It is ironic that these are now the oldest commercial structures remaining in downtown Albany only because everything else has been destroyed, except for the 1857 Depot and Bridge House." Also disturbing to Sherman was the lack of security he witnessed in 2004 at the old bridge house that was located within a larger revitalization project of River Front Park. Not only was he

able to enter the perimeter fence, but he noticed that windows and doors to the house were damaged and wide open. David contacted the police and Tommy Chatmon, head of "Albany Tomorrow," who promised to remedy the security breach immediately. When he did nothing within a few days, Sherman reminded him of the historical significance of the bridge house. "Not to take immediate steps to firmly secure and protect it would be irresponsible, and possibly preclude the opportunity to have it as a focal point of the park if fire or vandals should destroy it." The building was "too valuable to Albany and the State to continue to sit there in its current condition." He even suggested turning it over to a private developer or to Thronateeska for a dollar.[39]

While David cares deeply for his Tift family heritage and has visited Mystic several times, it matters much less to his stepbrother, John Sherman. "What does being a Tift mean to me? Absolutely nothing," he says. "I am what I am and don't feel any emotion about the past. Some others in the family have their snoots in the air because they're Tifts, but I don't." Born in 1945, John's most vivid memory from his youth relates to his father's discovery that he had opened a container of Wrigley's spearmint gum in the family's grocery warehouse. Mercer was so angry that he made his son eat 150 more pieces. John earned a marketing degree from UGA (1968) and a master's degree in business (1972). He worked for Potlatch Forest Products and First State Bank before going into real estate. After working for Albany Realty Company and Richard Tift, John opened his own firm, Sherman Associates. He still owns much of the Tift inheritance but claims to be "real estate poor." In addition to the home of his parents, he owns a place in the mountains, a beach house, some property in town, and a 550-acre farm. In 1966 John married Marian Chambless of Albany, also a UGA graduate, who teaches at Deerfield-Windsor School. Their younger son, Brian, like his uncle David, is a walker and has hiked the entire 2,175-mile Appalachian Trail.[40]

Richard and Elizabeth Tift had no immediate heirs, but Richard's half-sister, Susan Grove Tift, had numerous progeny. Born in 1921 in Kingstree, South Carolina, she was sent to Washington Seminary in Atlanta to be near doctors for treatment of early health problems, then attended Huntingdon College in Montgomery and Georgia State College for Women in

Milledgeville. She disliked the latter because it was so strict, particularly about seeing boys. Sue met her husband, Henry McGough, at a dance for Royal Air Force pilots at Darr Aero Tech. They were married on 6 December 1941. Henry's family had owned a 28,000-acre plantation north of Eufaula. "They were once very wealthy," she says, "and they continued to live like they had a lot of money, but they didn't. My husband didn't know what a plow was." When the black laborers started leaving, the McGoughs sold the land. Sue's husband took a job for the Alabama Public Service Commission and then became a salesman for a trucking firm. In 1972 the family moved to Mobile where Henry died in 1982. Sue has never been to Mystic but has always wanted to go there. "I do have a feeling about Mystic," she says. "I consider myself very Southern, but that family has always meant a lot to me."[41]

With the help of Robbie Lee Watkins, the McGoughs raised four children. Ona, born in 1942, graduated from Georgia Southwestern College and worked five years as a flight attendant for Delta Airlines. In 1966 she married Robert Gilbert, an engineering graduate of Georgia Tech who worked for a chemical company in Pensacola. Ona's non-profit agency, United Ministries, with support from churches, private organizations, and grants, assists over 2,000 clients yearly. The Gilberts' older son, John Scott (born 1969), graduated from FSU and sells commercial real estate in Orlando. "He's already a millionaire," says his grandmother, "kind of like Richard Tift, a go-getter with lots of personality, and he got in with the right people." Jeffrey (born 1971) graduated from FSU, and earned a master's degree in philosophy. He lives in Brooklyn and works as a library development officer at New York University (NYU). Ona calls him her "Yankee son," since he loves the North so much. Jeff, however, insists that he is

> absolutely NOT a Yankee, though I've felt more or less compelled to spend most of my life in the North. I am connected to the South in an almost spiritual way, and I have very strong feelings about Georgia, Alabama, and North Florida. I'll never feel that I'm "from" anywhere else. ...That said, the South has been a socially and intellectually burdensome place for me, and I really feel that I could only begin to find my sanity in New York City. I believe that the South is VERY good to those "lucky" enough to be able to accommodate themselves effortlessly to the social climate there. For my part, I've found that I cannot live in the South.

With regard to Mystic, Jeff's strongest impression is "how foreign it felt." None of it—the family graves, the town, the old Tift house, or the Baptist church—made him "feel like places where my ancestors would have resided. ...It's a bit hard to 'feel the place' in a way all too easy for me in the South." Likewise Ona, who thought Mystic was "fabulous," was shocked by how many relatives she has there "in the ground." Unlike previous generations of Tifts, there appear to be no current relatives and little else left to stir her Southern soul.[42]

Elizabeth (Betsy) McGough, born in 1945, attended the University of Southern Mississippi and became a travel agent. In 1967 she married David Coberth, a Georgia Tech graduate, and they had two children. Elizabeth's second husband, William Rumpp, is a retired professor from UNC and from the North. "She's Southern with a liberal bent," notes Ona. The McGoughs' third daughter is Susan, who was born in 1946 in Eufaula and earned a nursing degree from the University of Alabama. In 1967 she married Dr. Daniel McCall III, a pediatrician and scion of an old Mobile family. His father was a judge and his grandfather was Alabama's first pediatrician. When Susan moved to Mobile she felt obliged to fit into McCall traditions, including Mardi Gras balls and the family home that she and her husband bought in a prestigious area of old Mobile. Before the balls, according to her mother, "the women and men would separate for drinks. She said it felt like she was in a lion's den. She never knew anything about Mardi Gras, but her husband was familiar with it all. She's done very well, but it never came naturally. All that high society stuff didn't mean a thing to her."[43] Robert, the only son of Sue and Henry, was born in 1948 in Montgomery, attended Auburn, and heads the safety department at Shell Oil refinery north of Mobile.He is married to Lydia Weatherford, whose great-grandfather was William Weatherford (Red Eagle), a Creek Indian chief. In the War of 1812, his warriors massacred 500 white settlers at Fort Mims. After Andrew Jackson broke the power of the Creeks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, Weatherford surrendered at Fort Jackson (formerly Toulouse) and was pardoned by Jackson, who admired his courage. He is portrayed in a mural inside the dome of the Alabama state capital jumping on his horse.[44]

Sue McGough's younger brother Robert was born in 1927. After a stint in the Army, and with Richard Tift's encouragement, he entered the forestry

program at UGA and graduated in 1950. Over the next several decades he was a forester throughout South Georgia, retiring in 1986 to Douglas. In 1954 he married Virginia Massey, a graduate of Mercer University whom he met in Waycross. Their son, Samuel (born 1957), earned a criminal justice degree from Georgia Southern and served two stints in the Army. As a civilian he has worked as a probation officer in Ware and Coffee Counties and at the WalMart distribution center in Douglas. Although Robert is respectful of his Northern roots and liked Mystic when he once visited it, he regards himself as a "good Southerner. Well my great grandfather [Nelson] was Southern in a big way," is his rationale. "I was raised here, I'm the grandson of a Confederate soldier, I belong to the Sons of Confederate veterans, and I love history, especially Civil War History."[45] Like many of his ilk, Robert has become thoroughly acculturated, even to the point of recognizing the patriarch of the Albany Tifts not so much a Yankee as a Southerner.

Amidst the profusion of Albany Tifts who have professed loyalty and love for the Southland is the offspring of Nelson Tift and Virginia Mount Joyner, family members who have returned to the North. The Albany upbringing of Nelson, son of Julia Hall Tift and Edmund Joyner, was no less Southern than his kin, but after graduating from Virginia Military Institute in engineering he took a job with a national corporation in Cincinnati and met his future wife, a librarian, in an elevator. Virginia Mount, a native of Connersville, Indiana, had attended Indiana University and was a Christian Scientist. After their marriage in 1932, the Joyners lived many places in the North and abroad. These non-Southern influences had an impact on their three children.

Nelson Tift Joyner, Jr., born in 1937 in Chicago, earned an engineering degree from Cornell University and a master's in business administration from NYU. His interest in international business stemmed from a brief assignment at a Swiss chocolate company while working for American Standard, a plumbing fixture company. On another posting, in Wuertzburg, Germany, he met Suzanne Wernstrom, a Swedish student whose parents owned a firm that fabricated gas station tanks. After his marriage in 1964, Nelson's travels to Europe increased, and he used his experience with American Standard as a stepping stone to further international enterprises in the Washington area, including a position for which he operated business/government exchange programs for the Commerce Department and

Office of Economic Opportunity. In 1984 he started his own company, the Federation of International Trade Associations, in Reston, Virginia, which facilitates firms wishing to enter overseas markets. Although he often spent summers as a child at his grandparents' home, Nelson has lost virtually all contacts with Albany, his last visit being when his father's ashes were placed in Oakview Cemetery in 1964. Nor does he have any special feeling for Mystic, his only exposure being a brief visit while going somewhere else. Nelson does feel pride in the Tift family and what Nelson did in founding Albany, but he does not think traditional distinctions between Northerners and Southerners are useful any more. As a result of his extensive international experiences he regards himself as "mixed." Likewise the children of Nelson and Suzanne Joyner reflect the same sort of international identity. There appears to be little trace of Georgia heritage in these Tift descendants.[46]

No less far afield have been the associations of Nelson's younger sisters, Susan and Virginia. Born in 1939 in Englewood, New Jersey, Sue majored in American studies at Cornell University and upon graduation married Joe Hine, a Long Island native and graduate of Colgate University, whom she met during a spring break in Fort Lauderdale. While Joe worked for advertising firms in Manhattan, eventually retiring with Quaker Oats, Sue taught nursery school, worked in libraries, and raised their two children. She has fond memories of her Albany kin—including her great uncle Maurice as "a character and a real curmudgeon," her grandmother Julia "as sweet as can be," and her uncle Edmund Joyner as "very dear but frustrated at having to live off the generosity of Maurice." She also remembers how her father tried to cling to his Georgia roots by changing his name to Tift Joyner and attempting to grow okra in Massachusetts, but her own connections with the South are tenuous. Neither she nor her sister has visited Mystic, though it is located just an hour's ferry ride across Long Island Sound from their homes in the Hamptons. Both Joe's family and her own, she points out, are split between the North and South. Sue identifies herself as "Mason-Dixon line."[47]

Although Sue's sister Virginia (Ginny) claims no attachment to the South, her husband Mark insists "she's real Southern," even to the extent of holding a Kentucky Derby party each year. Ginny was born in 1943 and graduated from Principia College (Illinois) in 1965 with a history degree.

After working as social science editor for Harcourt Brace, she decided to go freelance in 1975 and now edits manuscripts from her home. Mark Ewald, whom she met on a blind date and married in 1974, is a lawyer and works for the Arbstrage and Hedge Fund, a company that buys stocks in anticipation of corporate mergers. What Ginny remembers about her visits to Albany as a child is a society steeped in tradition—"a time and attitude that is now gone. I was stepping into another culture when I went down there. Black this and that. It was very gentile and a loving household. Grits morning, noon, and night. I felt like a little Yankee down there." Further to highlight Virginia's awareness of Southern distinctiveness was a childhood friend in Kentucky who could not believe she used the term "negro" and not "nigger." Indeed her husband still thinks "they were all a bunch of crackers." Perhaps to escape that environment and acclimatize to the North, Ginny is a staunch liberal. Her sister remains a moderate Republican.[48] Not surprisingly, the children of Sue and Virginia reflect their parents' cosmopolitan outlook and the family's break from the South.

The descendants of Irene (Renee) and Francis Smith, on the other hand, are firmly rooted in the South, so much so that Renee would not admit that her grandfather Nelson was a Yankee. In 1934 the Smiths' eldest daughter Susan married Woodrow Wilson Brooks, who was a banker and mayor of Camilla. Their elder daughter Susan (born 1935) attended the University of Alabama for a year where she met and married Mark Lyons III of Mobile in 1954. Although her father was an alcoholic and her mother was often sick, Sue had a "wonderful childhood" and acquired "a love for other people from living in a small town." An awareness of the distinctiveness of Yankee ways came when Sue ran a guide service for Mobile tourists. They had exotic value. "I loved my Yankees," she says.[49] This branch of Tifts, including the three offspring of Sue and Mark, have remained proximate to the Gulf Coast, which, though not South Georgia, is Southern!

Aimee Hodges, born in 1917 in Columbia, South Carolina, is the younger sister of Susan Brooks. She grew up in Albany behind the Tift house and graduated from UGA in 1938. Her first husband, Harry Jennings, whom she met in college, was a nephew of John Sibley, "the most prominent lawyer in the land," and grandson of Dan Tucker of Lockerly Hall. After marriage in 1939 they occupied the house of his mother, Josephine King Sibley, in Milledgeville. Harry, however, served five years in the South Pacific during the war, and soon after returning died of cancer. Their son,

Harry, Jr. (born 1941), earned an engineering degree from Georgia Tech and went to work for the Air Force and NASA. "It was his computer that sent us to the moon in 1969," his mother proudly states. He married Barbara Mitchell of Eatonton, a UGA graduate, in 1964 and they raised three children. In 1956 Aimee married Fleming Hodges, a Navy veteran, who also died of cancer. Their two children are Nelson Tift Hodges (born 1957), who lives with his wife Jane in Vidalia and works as a water quality technician for Georgia Power, and Amy Hodges, who has been married three times and lives in Milledgeville. In the 1950s Aimee visited Mystic while touring New England. It was "a quaint fishing town," smaller than expected, and she recalls seeing the Tift house. "We were just in Mystic a day, didn't meet any of our Beebe cousins, and I never felt any urge to go back. After great-grand-daddy founded Albany, Albany was hallowed ground. I don't need Mystic or any of those places—that's Yankeeland." Her greatest joy until her sister Julia died in 2006 was going to Biloxi, Mississippi, to gamble. In her late eighties and weighing just seventy-five pounds, it was an outlet. "It works—just sitting in front of that little machine."[50]

Julia exhibited no less an attachment to the South and to Southern ways—generosity, friendliness, and lack of suspicion of other people. "Northerners don't know the definition of tacky. Southerners inherently know what it means." Julia was annoyed by Northern perceptions of the South. "When I would go north and go into a store and open my mouth, people would treat me like a retarded child." Even now, resentments linger over events that occurred generations ago. "Any invaded country has scars, and it goes down through the years. We were invaded during the War of Northern Aggression. But we wouldn't be as strong if we had not been invaded." Not all of Julia's sons, however, have shared her regional commitment. John, Jr. (born 1950) died of polio just as the Salk vaccine appeared. Francis (born 1952) graduated from Birmingham Southern College and earned a master's of music from the University of Redlands. He became a concert pianist and was playing for the San Francisco Ballet when he died of melanoma at age twenty-eight. Edward (born 1956), a University of Alabama graduate, flies helicopters for oil companies, but he occupies the family homestead in Dadeville. He and his former wife, whom he met in the Air Force, have four children who are cared for by a Spanish nanny. William

(born 1959) holds bachelor's and law degrees from Alabama and a Spanish law degree from the University of Alcala. He and his wife, a neurosurgeon from Belgrade, live in Mabella, Spain, with their three children. William, whose cultural affinities are more Spanish than American, resisted the urgings of his Southern mother, Julia, to use "Tift" in naming his two elder children, but eventually gave way by including it as a middle name for his youngest child. Whatever parochialism Julia's attachment to the South might imply, William enabled her to gain an international perspective. She traveled to Europe nineteen times, sometimes staying entire winters in Spain.[51]

Aside from his harrowing North Atlantic experiences during the war, Nelson Tift Mitchell has stayed in the Deep South. Like most of his Tift forebears, he exhibits strong educational values, having helped raise a million dollars to build a private school in Camilla. He and his wife Marjorie also express pride in the educational attainments and material success of their offspring. Their daughter, Linda (born 1945), graduated from UGA in 1968 and became a teacher and social worker. Her husband, Joe Morgan, also a Georgia graduate, is a pharmacist who owns a business in Camilla, a couple farms, and the retirement home where the Mitchells reside. Resourceful like the Tifts, he plans to start an ethanol plant to capitalize on South Georgia's agricultural bounty. Both of the Morgans' children entered the medical field. The Mitchells' son, Nelson III (born 1949), retired as director of youth development in Albany and is married to Patrice Niager of Tennessee. Not all of their four children, however, are inclined to be Southern.[52]

C. B. Pritchett, Jr. exhibits as great an attachment to his family heritage and the South as any Tift descendant. Born in 1925, the son of Isabel and C. B. Pritchett Sr., Bunny earned a business degree from UGA and entered the Navy during World War II. Prior to his historical awakening on an aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean, he had no exposure or interest in the Civil War. On returning Bunny started collecting Civil War materials and visiting sites, and it was this interest that stimulated his curiosity about Nelson Tift and his ironclads. Though mindful of his great-great-grandfather's Yankee roots, Bunny, like Nelson, reflects views of an unreconstructed Southerner.

> Slaves were brought in by Northerners who sold them in the South, where their use was well suited to the crops and climate, then complained over the

> institution. ...Agitation, in the form of abolitionism, came from New England. They were real Yankees, and Nelson was one of them. Most Yankees in the South felt threatened, but Nelson fit right in. I have great respect for Nelson's intelligence and am proud of the fact that he cast his lot with the South in the War.

To Pritchett the war was triggered by "an *outright invasion*" from the North, and Nelson was fully justified in defending the South. Bunny occasionally visits Mystic, mainly for emotional reasons. This attachment to his family heritage is further exemplified in the Civil War memorabilia housed in his private museum. At the heart of this collection is Nelson's original portrait and diaries, historical resources of great value not only for the Tifts but for the state of Georgia.[53]

Like so many of his ancestral kin, Bunny has been active in civic affairs. His father, C. B. Pritchett, Sr., a North Carolinian who attended Elon College, came to Atlanta about 1915 to work in the Ford auto parts plant. After serving in World War I, he moved to Albany to manage a Ford dealership. In 1970 Bunny and his brother Thomas took over the business, located at the site of the current downtown library. In 1959 he married Anna White of Vienna, and they had two children, and by his second marriage to Susan Nesmith, Bunny has a daughter. He not only served as city and police commissioner during the era of the Albany movement, but he was also president of the Rotary Club in the early 1970s, president of the chamber of commerce, and a speaker (on historical subjects) to other community groups. Retired since 1998, he remains active in commercial real estate and managing his museum. Unlike his brother and sister Susan, who displayed "zero interest" in the Civil War, Bunny feels a need to preserve his Tift heritage and its identification with the South. He feels no animosity to Northerners—only to historians and Hollywood producers who misconstrue facts and convey an inaccurate interpretation of the Civil War and Southern history.[54]

The experiences of C. B. Pritchett reveal, perhaps more than any of his kin, the dilemma of the most recent generations of Tifts—of professing loyalty and pride in the deeds of their distinguished ancestors, while at the same time living in a world that often rejects or is resentful of those traditions. As Sue Hine ruefully reflects, from the perspective of a re-Northernized Southerner, "if I'm in Georgia, I'm very proud to be a Tift,

though genealogy doesn't mean much today." An indication of the extent to which latter-day Tifts identify with their Georgia roots is revealed by a survey of the geographical and cultural inclinations of family members included in this chapter.

Tifton Branch

Seventh Generation—37		Eighth Generation—68	
Residence	*Cultural Identity*	*Residence*	*Cultural Identity*
Georgia-20 (54%)	Southern-26 (81%)	Georgia-27 (40%)	Southern-37 (70%)
The South-13(35%)	Other-6 (19%)	The South-26 (38%)	Other-16 (30%)
Other-4 (11%)	Unknown-5	Other-15 (22%)	Unknown-15
Spouse	*College*	*Spouse*	*College*
Southern-30 (83%)	Georgia-9 (31%)	Southern-10 (63%)	Georgia-8 (22%)
Other-6 (17%)	The South-16 (55%)	Other-6 (37%)	The South-15 (42%)
Not Applicable-6	Other-4 (14%)	Not Applicable-49	Other-13 (36%)

Albany Branch

Seventh Generation—25		Eighth Generation—52	
Residence	*Cultural Identity*	*Residence*	*Cultural Identity*
Georgia-12 (48%)	Southern-20 (87%)	Georgia-22 (42%)	Southern-38 (75%)
The South-9 (36%)	Other-3 (13%)	The South-16 (31%)	Other-13 (25%)
Other-4 (16%)	Unknown-2	Other-14 (27%)	Unknown-1
Spouse	*College*	*Spouse*	*College*
Southern-15 (75%)	Georgia-13 (57%)	Southern-17 (77%)	Georgia-9 (25%)
Other-5 (25%)	The South-7 (30%)	Other-5 (23%)	The South-18 (50%)
Not Applicable-5	Other-3 (13%)	Not Applicable-27	Other-9 (25%)

What can be extrapolated from these data is that both branches of Tifts retain a strong Georgia and Southern presence, but there has been a pronounced centrifugal movement between generations. For the Tifton Tifts, 78% of the eighth generation resides in the South, down from 89% in the seventh, while respective figures for the Albany branch are 73% from 84%. Respective declines for Georgia residence are 42% from 59% (Tifton) and 42% from 48% (Albany). Similar diasporic tendencies appear in other indices where Tifts overall are less inclined (72% from 83%) to prefer

Southern culture, less apt to marry a Southerner (71% from 80%) or attend a Southern college (69% from 87%) in the eighth generation than the seventh. Albanians, perhaps owing to deeper roots, appear more successful in preserving Southern ways than their Tifton cousins. Contrary to the findings of John Shelton Reed on regional consciousness, these data suggest that identification with the Southern culture decreases with life experiences outside of the region, a product perhaps of latent Yankee tendencies and persistence of conflicting identities within the family.[55] On the whole, current generations of Tifts have chosen to remain Southern and in the South, yet continue to be proud of their Northern ancestors.

Epilogue and Conclusion

> This is a family whose members knew life in the ante-bellum years, survived the War between the States and the terrible Reconstruction Era which followed it, and have been leaders in the now triumphant movement to restore the South to its rightful place in the nation while participating in the modern agricultural, commercial, and industrial birth of a dynamic new South which has assumed national leadership in several fields.[1]—Warren Grice & E. Merton Coulter

The Tift family of Georgia has bequeathed a legacy of achievement, largely in agriculture, business, education, and public service, to the twenty-first century. An entire region of the state owes much of its settlement and early development to the courage, tenacity, and vision of Nelson and Henry Harding Tift. The most tangible evidence of their efforts has been the emergence of two major municipalities (Albany and Tifton) and counties (Dougherty and Tift) over the past century. Census data indicate that from 1900 to 2000 Albany's population increased from 4,606 to 76,939, while Tifton's grew from 1,384 to 15,060. Corresponding county figures for 2000 are 95,923 (Dougherty) and 38,450 (Tift). And the Selig Center for Economic Growth at UGA projects continued growth in population, employment, and per capita personal income for the two counties.

Population

	2000	2005	2010 est.	Ann. % Growth '05–'10
Dougherty	95,923	95,208	95,893	0.1
Tift	38,450	40,367	43,295	1.4
Region	585,904	607,490	652,546	1.4
Georgia	8,230,087	9,099,247	10,529,893	3.0

EMPLOYMENT

	2000	2005	2010 est	Ann. % Growth '05–'10
Dougherty	54,399	50,957	50,116	-0.3
Tift	20,739	20,830	21,545	0.7
Region	231,267	231,912	242,173	0.9
Georgia	3,755,464	3,802,895	4,177,742	1.9

PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME

	2000	2005	2010 est.	Ann. % Growth '05–'10
Dougherty	21,608	26,721	32,526	4.0
Tift	21,878	24,454	28,893	3.4
Region	20,559	24,554	29,518	3.8
Georgia	27,989	31,647	38,104	3.8

According to *Georgia Trend*, economic development leaders in Southwest Georgia "are feeling upbeat," and that "better times are here."[2]

That Dougherty and Tift Counties lag behind Georgia and most of the region's other twenty-five counties in all growth sectors may be attributed to their traditional reliance on agriculture. Despite a "Hog, Hominy and Hay" campaign by journalist Henry McIntosh in the 1890s to wean Albany's economy away from King Cotton, agribusiness remained the principal source of income. Hence the area became a leading producer of peanuts and pecans.[3] The latter industry began in 1872 when Major R. J. Bacon imported seedlings from East Texas and planted them on his plantation south of the city. The seedlings thrived in the soil and climate of Southwest Georgia, and from 1900 to 1950 pecan nurseries in Baconton furnished most of the trees east of the Mississippi. By the end of the century there were 180,000 acres of pecan trees in Georgia, mostly around Albany, and about one-third of national and more than half of state pecan production occurred within a sixty-mile radius. This surfeit of pecans was critical to the success of Bob's Candies, which introduced nickel and dime bars with pecans in 1923. "Bobs Pe-kons," a toffee candy shaped like half a pecan, notes Sharon Thomason, "was a major hit and synonymous with Bobs for decades." So important were its pecan products that the company changed its name in 1931 to Bob's Candy and Pecan Company.[4] In recent decades there have

been further efforts to diversify the economy into non-agricultural areas, featuring such high-profile national corporations as Procter and Gamble, Cooper Tire, and Miller Brewing. Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, the city's largest employer, is a mainstay in the local economy, but the others are subject to the vagaries of outside forces, and the Marine Corps Logistics Base, which provides 3,000 jobs, is vulnerable to periodic base closing reviews. Latest diversification efforts focus on a revitalization of the riverfront, including a scenic park, a 175,000-gallon aquarium, a renovation of the bridge house, a relocation of the Albany's art museum, and a new Hilton Garden Inn to expand the city's tourist and convention trade.[5]

Naysayers, such as Gil Barrett, question the need for an aquarium, insisting that Albany is spending money irresponsibly, particularly with no nearby interstate. The city is also in danger of losing its tax base with the flight of so many Albanians to Lee County where taxes are lower. Lee growth rates, at 4.8% (2000–2005) and 4.9% (2005–2010), are among the highest in the region. Most observers agree, however, that it is not so much tax flight as white flight from Albany, which (like the 1850s) is about two-thirds black and has recently elected its first black mayor, Dr. Willie Adams, Jr. Although she keenly supported the Albany movement, Bee McCormack recalls that "up until the civil rights movement and visit of Martin Luther King, race relations were better in Albany than any other place in the region." She echoes a sentiment held by many Tifts: "We loved them and they loved us, but it was based on an iron-clad understanding that the races were separate." Bee attributes Albany's pre-sixties racial climate to Nelson Tift, whose lack of religious prejudice and ecumenical ways led him to support all denominations, including Catholics and Jews, and to donate lands to them. Similarly "Whites and Blacks lived together in harmony." When her Irish Catholic family moved to Albany in the 1920s, "we were concerned about the treatment of Catholics and Jews and were pleased that they were treated very well. Albany was an oasis in the South of racial prejudice." Bee regrets that city government became so polarized and blacks became so militant, but she has hopes for the new mayor, who was elected with substantial white support.[6]

Willie Adams, however, has a different perspective on Albany's racial and Tift heritage. "I don't have a dying interest in the Tift family," he asserts. "I'm not interested in Nelson or any of the other Tifts, but I am interested in Horace King. He strikes a sense of pride in me." Willie regrets that "Albany

was founded as a slave trading area." Still he realizes that "Nelson was an entrepreneur who was in many businesses, and during that time cotton and slavery were important to this area. I'm not anti-Nelson Tift because he was a slave owner. It was a sign of the times. You have to give him credit for what he did." Now times are changing. Prior to Adams's election, no black candidate received more than 40% of the black vote. Now blacks occupy key positions in the city/county infrastructure. "Some people don't feel comfortable when they're not in control and flee to Lee County," Willie admits, but he believes the racial situation is "much better. A lot of emotional changes have taken place. When the water rises, all boats will rise. When you raise the quality of life of the city, everyone benefits. I got a gut feeling that we are moving away from race and more towards the haves and have nots." He believes that Albany will soon be "the city south of Atlanta to be dealt with."[7]

Race remains, however, critical in interpreting Albany's past. Aside from a downtown marker and occasional street names, there are few reminders of the city's associations with the Tift family. Nelson's portrait, once situated outside the Dougherty Superior Courtroom, no longer graces any public building in Albany.[8] Indeed the focus of heritage initiatives appear to be moving from white to black. The riverfront park is named the Horace King Overlook after the free black builder rather than the slave-holding owner. And plans are in the works for a multi-million dollar expansion of the Civil Rights museum. For Mayor Adams, who contends that much African-American history has been ignored, such projects are long overdue. Another sign of the times is an increasing marginalization of Confederate history. Lovingly erected a century ago by sons and daughters of veterans, Albany's Confederate soldier monument once stood downtown in the middle of Pine and Jackson Streets. After a motorist accidently demolished it in the mid-1920s, a new one was made in Italy and placed on the lawn of the municipal auditorium. When the auditorium was restored in the late 1980s, it was moved to Oakview Cemetery. Finally veterans groups, with Bunny Pritchett in the lead, established a Confederate memorial park at the Lee County line, segregated from Albany, as a permanent resting place for the monument.[9]

Tommy Gregors, as director of the Thronateeska Heritage Center, seeks to preserve and honor both cultural traditions and thinks the racial situation is improving.[10] He attributes the city's failure to recognize its founding family to the outlook and approach of Nelson Tift, who as a businessman attracted like-minded people to his community to fulfill his entrepreneurial goals. "He was practical, opportunistic and present-minded. This town has typically torn down things and rebuilt other things. The bridge house remained only because Paul Keenan's father bought it, and it remained a business. ...People in this town aren't out there clamoring to have their houses placed on the national historic registry." This attitude helps explain, perhaps more than racial reasons, the city's lack of eagerness to preserve the bridge house and properties in Sandy Bottom. Gregors also cites the integration of Tifts into other families, the "private mentality" of Albanians, and the fact that family members are not investing money in the community as other reasons why they are not more widely heralded. Still, Albany owes much to the Tifts. "As in the days of Nelson, it is still a business community, and the town is still connected by families."[11]

Tifton, though also influenced by business and family priorities, presents another scenario. Not only was slavery never practiced within its environs, but Henry Tift's settlement felt the full impact of the New South movement. As Wilber Caldwell observes, "New South promoters had long promised that if agriculture could be diversified, industrial progress would follow. Although few places in Georgia would test the theory, Tifton proved true." Tifton's founder had the foresight to diversify the agriculture and agribusiness operations and to endow both with the scientific expertise of an experiment station and an agricultural college. As late as 1945, 91% of county lands were used for farming.[12] By the mid-1960s, income from agriculture exceeded $15 million yearly. While peanuts and tobacco accounted for 40% of that figure, and cattle, hogs, cotton, and poultry another 20%, such products as timber and sweet potatoes, with annual incomes of $650,000 and $800,000 respectively, contributed greatly to the local economy. Another commodity, vegetable plants, resulted from Henry's program of transplanting Northerners to South Georgia. According to Cynthia Langenfeld,

> Two Ohio brothers, M. F. and John Myers, settled in the Tift area in the late 1890's and began a truck farming operation. One day when transplanting sweet potatoes from a bed to the field, they tossed some extra plants under a

> shed. Several days later they noticed the plants were still alive and came up with the idea that plants could survive even if shipped to other parts of the country. In 1909, they shipped over one million potato plants north. Other farmers soon followed suit sensing that here was a supplement to the cotton crop. In 1918, an Indiana man contracted to have tomato plants grown in Tift County on an extensive scale. Other Northern growers soon discovered the advantages of field-hardened, Southern seedlings. ...For the next 30 years more and more land was turned over to seedlings.

By 1974, 4,032 acres of tomato seedlings yielded 709,699,744 plants for an annual gross of $3.5 million. About 95% of the vegetable plants for the Eastern United States and Canada came from South Georgia.[13]

Although scholars have long perceived reliance on agriculture as the most serious impediment to economic, social, and political progress in the South, Tifton has turned a potential liability into its greatest asset.[14] So suited is the soil and climate of the region to vegetation that, along with the entrepreneurial spirit fostered by Henry Tift, foodstuffs from South Georgia have found a permanent niche in the national economy. "You can grow almost anything in Tifton," observes Virginia Brumby. A key to success is constant experimentation, diversification, and staying in tune with market forces. A value added approach, whereby fruits and vegetables are processed and marketed by farmer cooperatives, has not only increased profits but yielded higher quality peanuts and an onion (Tifton Sweet) that rivals the Vidalia. Mayor Paul Johnson, a retired agriculturalist from the experiment station, delights in talking about Tifton's agri-economy.

> In recent years sod and grass cultivation has come to the fore. The experiment station started some new varieties of Bermuda and other turf grasses for livestock that are now used throughout the world. Lots of land formerly in corn and soybeans is now sod farms. We are on the cutting edge of developing alternate energy sources, such as ethanol biodiesel (soy bean or peanut oil blended with diesel). Sawgrass, which has a lot of cellulose in it, is a good raw material for ethanol. Right now watermelons and cantaloupes are big. Peanuts are our biggest money-maker, then vegetables such as beans and tomatoes, and then cantaloupes. Some tobacco, but not so much any more owing to changes in American smoking habits. Sweet potatoes were big at one time, but the sweet potato weevil took its toll on the business. Cotton has made a big comeback.[15]

In fact, textiles remained Tifton's largest manufacturing component, and in 2005 another sixty-five jobs were added to the local economy with the opening of a $15 million peanut shelling plant. With 62% of its land under cultivation (the state's county average is 28%), Tift was one of few Georgia counties in the 1990s to show an increase in acres harvested. By 2003, with 15,000 acres in peanuts and 6,000 in blueberries in Tift, Georgia was gaining on Florida as the second most productive vegetable state behind California.[16]

Just as Henry Tift took advantage of crossing rails in the 1870s, location plays an important role in further diversifying Tifton's economy. When President Eisenhower launched the interstate highway system in 1956, the city was planning to build a five-mile bypass to ease downtown congestion. After assimilation by the federal government into I-75, Tiftonians celebrated this "first link" of the nation's greatest public works project with a fifteen-foot monument in an Eisenhower Memorial Garden. The creation of six exits through the influence of Senator Herman Talmadge (whose college roommate became a Tifton developer) made the city a hub for interstate travel and commerce in the 1960s.[17] But the growth of motels, service stations, and restaurants along I-75 also brought deterioration to the downtown district in the 1970s and a loss of the sense of community that Henry Tift created a century earlier. "One by one," as Julie Smith notes, most of Tifton's Main Street stores were closing or moving to the new mall at the Interstate. "Those grand buildings that once were the pride of Downtown were vacant and deteriorating. Many had been passed on to the next generation of owners who did not live in Tifton, adding apathetic, absentee landowners to the problem. The change did not happen overnight. But the result was the same. Downtown was dying and taking its last breath." In the mid-1980s, however, city leaders took bold steps to preserve Tifton's heritage by forming the Downtown Development Authority and, with state, federal, and foundation funding, partnered with a local developer to restore the Myon Hotel into a city hall complex with apartments, professional offices, and shops. Many other renovation projects followed, resulting in yearly revenue increases of 13% for the city after 1986.[18]

Tifton again broadcasts itself as a "boomtown" with such new facilities as a $17 million Henry Tift Myers Airport Terminal, a $1 million aquatic center, a $5 million municipal building, and a 7,500-gallon water tank. Emphasis now, according to Johnson, is on "warehousing, distribution, and data transfer, as compared to industry a few years ago." Drawing from human

resources in fourteen counties (called the Tiftarea), the board of education is the city's largest employer, followed by the Tifton Regional Medical Center. The newly developed UGA campus at Tifton, an offshoot of the experiment station, includes a technology center that houses research and development branches for companies and an 83,000-square-foot conference center. With 140 scientists engaged in agricultural research in the area, Johnson boasts that Tifton employs the highest number of Ph.D.s of any town its size in the country.[19] Complementing these public endeavors is a flourishing, largely private tourist trade. In 2003 there were 1,674 jobs related to tourism with an annual income of $68 million. Tifton's most important attraction is Georgia Agrirama, a living history museum established in 1972 on seventy acres next to the experiment station. Its director points out that "Georgia's primary industry is still agriculture, and tourism is second. We do both, and we're also involved in education, another priority."[20] How ironic that a facility designed to depict Georgia's agricultural heritage and rural way of life in the nineteenth century should also overlook a four-lane highway with eighteen-wheelers speeding back and forth between Florida and the North. Yet, like the Empire Garden Midsummer Fair in days of yore, it showcases the bounty wrought by Tifton's founder. It would no doubt please Henry Tift to witness this sign of progress from his restored home that now sits at the entrance to Agrirama.

The omnipresent issue of race also looms large in Tifton, but with a different dynamic than in Albany. Tifton never knew slavery, hence the black population, now at 32%, never threatened white hegemony that tempered activism during the Civil Rights era. John Johnson, a policeman in the 1970s, recalls only one incident with whites and blacks at the high school taunting each other. "Both sides were posturing for attention, but they seemed glad we were holding them back." Mayor Johnson refers to the large influx of Hispanic people as the new racial issue. "The bigger vegetable producers rely almost totally on Mexicans. Employers advertise in the local paper. Some locals come, but they can't keep up and don't show up the next day." In 2005 Tifton was rocked by the murder of several Hispanic workers by a gang of blacks looking for cash, but such incidents are rare. "The community really pulled together," says Johnson. "Hispanics are very much involved in the life of the community. Many are merchants, they go to our schools, and we depend on them to get the work done. Tifton enjoys a peaceful and cordial race environment. There was nothing like the Albany

movement here and no white flight to Lee County!"[21] But as Serita Tift points out, "Tifton is having problems with Mexican gangs," notably one called Sur 13. "Blacks don't like Mexicans." A further sign of the times, as in Albany, was the flight of the Tifton's Confederate statute to the outskirts of town. Unveiled in 1910 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) at the intersection of Love Avenue and Fourth Street, it became a meeting place for Tifton youth. After several cars hit the statue in the 1940s, it was moved to the courthouse lawn, then to the center of Tift Avenue and Twelfth Street, and in 1975 to a corner of that intersection. Finally, in 1992 the UDC moved the memorial into Fulwood Park, enabling "the soldier to rest in peace, tucked away in the shadows of the tall pines," according to an article entitled "Tifton's 'Moving' Statue."[22]

Tifton's founder, of course, had nothing to do with the lost cause. On the other hand, his uncles Nelson, Asa, and Charles had planted earlier roots in the Southland that required loyalty to its traditions. Even so, their cultural identity and that of the next two generations of Tifts was tentative at times and subject to redefining. This flux of family affiliations began when Solomon moved from the traditional Tefft homeland in Rhode Island to Connecticut, called by New England historian Charles Andrews "the most conventionally conservative of all the English colonies in the New World." This parochial environment—inward-looking, agricultural, and steeped in Calvinist theology—could have been stifling on later generations. But it also bred strength of character and habits of mind that were unique. "No colony surpassed Connecticut in the production of men possessed of the natural gifts of enterprise and leadership, in the output of strong characters endowed with vigor of opinion, tenacity of conviction, and shrewdness of wit."[23] Furthermore, for those living in coastal areas with seafaring inclinations, it was more possible to escape the restraints of Puritan culture and develop a cosmopolitan outlook. The Tifts and others, such as the Mallorys, were ideally positioned in Mystic to bring their Yankee ways to bear on the outside world, much of which was undeveloped. And as Andrews and Fletcher Green show, there was an outpouring of enterprising Connecticut Yankees prior to the Civil War, especially to the South.

The first testing ground for the pioneering spirit of the early Tifts was Key West, where the family survived many hardships and laid the basis for its business enterprises. In this remote yet cosmopolitan outpost, Amos Tift and his sons applied the work ethic instilled by their New England upbringing

while indulging in the adventuresome spirit that was denied them in Connecticut. By the time of Amos's departure in 1829, they were just Yankees living on the Southern tip of the United States. Whatever cultural uncertainties their presence implied became more clearly focused as regional attitudes hardened in ensuing decades. While Amos Chapman Tift, though with misgivings, retreated to the embrace of his Northern wife, religion, and culture, Nelson, Asa, and Charles married Southerners, developed a faith in business, and identified with the Southern cause. All had to make compromises to fit into an environment that was physically and culturally alien to their New England roots.

Although Asa and Charles were eminently successful in their own right, no Tift legacy remains in Key West or even in Mystic where Amos Chapman struggled to survive financially. That family fortunes, including those of his brothers, gravitated to South Georgia owes mainly to the energy and vision of Nelson Tift. His willingness to take risks played no small part in his success, as did the fact that he secured a ground-level position as Albany's first citizen and could thereby control development. Nelson was not the first white settler in the 1830s, but to employ a variant of Don Doyle's "New Men, New Cities" model, Southwest Georgia, like postwar Atlanta, was a void, where newcomers could get a fresh start and develop a new city. Nelson could be hypocritical, mercenary, and even self-seeking, yet he was remarkably honest, and his reputation for integrity went a long way in gaining the confidence of fellow citizens. In response to allegations of wrongdoing in an 1847 political contest, he defied his accusers "to point out a single instance in which I have not yielded my private interests to those of the public, whenever they came in collision."[24] No small part of Nelson's success may be attributed to an ability to convert his pioneering spirit into a public spirit.

But it was his attitude toward slavery that was most critical to his acceptance, and it went beyond economic opportunism. "Native Africans," he stated in 1850, "occupy the very lowest position in the scale of humanity—in morals and intellect, but a little above the brute creation." Nelson's beliefs toward blacks and their place in society were deep-seated. And they were the more potent for their genetic and ideological bearing. Despite his Yankee ways, Nelson easily passed what C. Vann Woodward called "the cardinal test of loyalty" to Southern identity. "Southerners who rejected the test were therefore forced to reject the whole heritage. In many cases, if they were

vocal in their rejection, they were compelled to leave the South and return only at their peril."[25] Nelson, however, was vocal in his *defense* of Southern rights, both in word and deed. He thus attained a comfort and acceptance level that was at least as high as that of native Southerners. "I have never denied, or been ashamed of the place of my birth," he explained in 1870. "It was an occurrence over which I had no control, and for which I claim no credit and feel no responsibility. But I am responsible for the fact that, from free choice, I have been now more than forty years a citizen of Georgia, and...during that period I have tried to reciprocate the generous confidence of her people by devoting my best energies to her welfare."[26] For more than half a century Nelson applied his entrepreneurial talents to the well-being of Southwest Georgians. That he was able to do so owes much to the fact that he became, as a leader for their cause, more Southern than most Southerners. As such, he led his people first down a path of destruction but ultimately to recovery and prosperity.

Henry Harding Tift spent the Civil War in Connecticut, and his brother Orville even served in the Union Army. Therefore their influence and outlook were wholly Northern and provide an even better fit for Doyle's New South model. Like Amos and his sons, they also experienced an apprenticeship at sea. Whether Henry and his kin could have made such a mark in a less pristine and more competitive environment than South Georgia is open to conjecture, but he made the right economic moves at the right times and complemented them with social amenities. While adhering to the strict racial code of his era, he took advantage of the region's only abundant resource, timber, and made maximum use of his settlement's railroad connections. Realizing the importance of diversification, Henry initiated other economic endeavors, such as turpentine distilling and fruit and vegetable farming, which entailed recruitment of immigrants from the North who shared his work ethic. Tifton turned into a boom town in the 1890s, and a decade later a county was carved around it, the result of a 1904 constitutional amendment that allowed more than 137 counties. Henry's participation in the "New County Movement" coincides with other opportunistic ventures, including the founding of the Coastal Plain Experiment Station and the Second District Agricultural School, and his benefactions to Bessie Tift College and local churches. Most importantly, recognizing that cotton was still king in Georgia, he started phasing out his timber operations and established cotton mills in Tifton and Atlanta. Not unlike other leading

entrepreneurs of the state, Henry used these industries as a base to expand into related areas, such as banking, railroads, cottonseed oil, bricks, and general merchandise. Paul Johnson, who recognizes the "lasting mark" made by the Tifts on his city's quality of life, attributes much of it to the "work ethic, intelligence, quest for knowledge, and community involvement" of its founder. Johnson will not concede that these are "Yankee values." Rather he sees them more as "American values, and I hope that they are also Southern values."[27]

Tifton thus indulged in what are often termed the three pillars of the New South—manufacturing, diversified agriculture, and education—with an infusion of Yankee resourcefulness. But Henry's town was hardly unique. In Albany, Nelson subscribed to the New South ethos and was no less entrepreneurial. After the war he too capitalized on cotton and had a sawmill and much else, but his foremost interest was in the potential of railroads. By 1901, a decade after his death, seven lines met in Albany, leading to a near doubling of its population by 1910 and to what Wilber Caldwell calls "the surge of change riding on the power of rail. ...This kind of urban growth was the stuff of the New South myth, and a long-suffering Albany was about to step out of darkness to glimpse a sliver of the light of the modern age."[28] That Albany was able to sustain its momentum owes in part to Tifts of the fifth and sixth generations, especially Maurice Wheeler and Richard Tift. The former followed roughly the same developmental model as his grandfather, combining agriculture with manufacturing and commercial interests and a strong commitment to public service. His widespread involvements no less than his longevity made Maurice a pillar of his community. Richard followed a somewhat different course through his development of rural real estate and association with outside interests that brought financial resources and notoriety to this obscure corner of Georgia. As Warren Grice and Merton Coulter note, "Richard Tift grew up aware of the traditions of his family." Even as a young man he was "well acquainted with the responsibilities of such citizenship" and ready "to assume his place in civic affairs, political life, and community betterment."[29] Both men exhibited a high degree of Yankee ingenuity and enterprise, but they were otherwise Southern to the core.

On the Tifton side these cultural dynamics were evident in the fifth and sixth generations with Thomas Willingham and Henry Tift III, but in different contexts. Despite Bessie Tift's strong attachment to South Georgia, both got a strong whiff of what the outside world was like at Yale and Harvard and sought to make their marks in the more cosmopolitan settings of Atlanta and Macon. Migrating to areas that were larger and already developed, it is hardly surprising that their influence would not be as great as that of their forefathers in Albany, Tifton, and Key West. Yet they both contributed much to the economic and social life of their respective communities. In Tommy's case, it focused almost totally on businesses started by his father. "He worked seven days a week," according to his daughter. Tommy, Jr. inherited his father's work habits but redirected the family enterprises to stay abreast of the times. Henry Tift's professional commitment to medicine and location in a smaller town steered him more towards community service, traits that continue with his sons. That they persist in the seventh generation is evident with Mike Brumby's dedication to community service through recreational and educational programs. "To whom much is given, much is expected" (paraphrasing Luke 12:48) expresses his Tift heritage of public service. "I like to think you make a difference. It's one of the great satisfactions of life."[30] His family's commitment to education, however, often leading to higher degrees from some of the nation's best schools, has sometimes resulted in political and social views that are not traditionally Southern and a tendency in recent generations of Tifts to leave the region.

Any re-Yankeefication of the Tifts, however, will necessarily encounter stiff resistance owing to a socialization process in Georgia going back to the days of Nelson and Henry. Aside from such physical acts as moving to the state, staking out large tracts of real estate, and enjoying the fruits of Southern habitation for nearly two centuries, there are two defining choices that have inscribed their regional identity. The first was Nelson's decision to be a slave owner, defend slavery, cast his lot with the Confederacy, and play a leading role among the redeemers. This position placed the family on the right side of the most basic determinant of social survival and success of white Southerners. Although slavery was not an issue for succeeding generations of Tifts, many of the same attitudes and conditions persisted, as the Danish film *Manderlay* (2005) so vividly depicts, for most of the twentieth-century South. Hence segregation, however tempered by paternalistic love, became

as acceptable in the era of Maurice Wheeler and Henry Harding Tift as the institution of slavery was embraced by the family in the Old South. Some members of the eighth generation are troubled by these accommodations to what is now perceived as America's greatest social evil. For Jeff Gilbert, insulated by time (post-Civil Rights) and space (New York) from the culture of his forefathers, his most accomplished ancestor, Nelson Tift, comes across in the pages of his diary as

> increasingly miserly and cool. ...Perhaps it's become tiresome to have to mention what was after all a universal moral shortcoming (in the South, if not the whole nation), but it's important to me that it be recognized. The Tifts were not planters, and they were not large slave owners. Nonetheless, I'd have to characterize Col. Tift's behavior in this regard as at least disappointing.[31]

Jeff's distant cousin, Maisy Willingham Tift, liberated as an Oberlin College graduate living in San Francisco, would no doubt agree with these sentiments. Most contemporary Tifts, especially those in the South, are more inclined to dismiss any moral shortcomings of their ancestors, rationalizing that such behavior should be judged within the context of the times or excusing it as a brief lapse in what has otherwise been a family history remarkably free from public scandal or shame.

With regard to their own reckonings on race, virtually all of those interviewed from the sixth and seventh generations expressed enlightened views, more in keeping with their own era, professing only the kindest regards for blacks and a sort of spiritual kinship as Southerners. A far greater and less complicated bond, however, that enabled the Tifts to gain a Southern identity were the connections they formed with other significant families of the region.[32] Nelson's marriage into the Mercer family and Henry's link with the Willinghams marked the beginning of a process that eventually embraced, by marriage or close association, many important families of the state and region—including such high-profile names as Hill, Hall, Ashe, Smith, and Woodruff on the Albany side and Pound, Brumby, Inman, Lee, Terrell, and Warner on the Tifton side, as well as local linkages with such families as the Woolfolks, Westbrooks, Nelsons, Newmans, Shermans, Olivers, and Lyonses for Albanians and the Bacons, Skinners, Rankins, and Hardwicks for Tiftonians. Notwithstanding counteractive marriage ties to the Northern Joyners on the Albany side and the Mallorys and Joneses on

the Tifton side, cultural forces drawing members of the Tift family to the South, compounded over several generations, were overwhelming. How these connections formed and functioned from interlocking business interests is explained by Tammy Galloway in her study of another influential Georgia family, the Inmans. "Alliances among the elites were not limited to cooperation in business but included the intermarrying of the children of upper class, closing the groups and solidifying their positions." Hence succeeding generations became more dependent on birth rather than personal achievement to "justify their position in society." Admittedly the Tifts were more of a rural than urban elite, and their status never reached that of the immensely rich and powerful Inmans. Still they were able to establish a pedigree that allowed them to become part of what Don Doyle calls a "constellation" of Southern families who retained their social standing by associating with others of their own ilk.[33]

For the Tifts, however, the pressures to conform were much greater in South Georgia than in the Northernized environs of Atlanta. Data show, even for the diasporic eighth generation, a strong identification and homing instinct for the South, even to the extent that some would consider it an insult to be considered Yankee in any way. This socialization and cohesion is indicated also by the existence of endearing nicknames among family members—Tinky, Weetie, Presh, Tee, Buster, Bunny, Muffin, etc. Another sign of "family intensity" in the South, according to Bertram Wyatt-Brown, is the practice of replacing ordinary Christian names with distinguished ancestral surnames, "a custom not so readily found in polite Northern circles." For the last two generations of Tifts, however, it took the form of a latent identification with their Northern origins. Consistent with their continuing focus on business is the persistence of surnames of Mystic origin (Tift nineteen times and Harding four) for first and middle names. Full names such as Henry Harding Tift Brumby, Henry Harding Tift V, Thomas Nelson Tift, Nelson Tift Joyner, Nelson Tift Lyons, Nelson Tift Hodges, and Nelson Tift Mitchell still abound. Many members of recent generations have visited Mystic, and some even have an affinity for the sea, more versions of the homing instinct. The resulting cultural confusion shows up most perhaps in the fifth generation. "I am part of New England and it is part of me," mused Katherine Tift Jones. "And yet I feel more Southern than Northern. I suppose because the South was where I lived. ...But I like to think of being part of each—a Georgia cracker and a Damn-Yankee."[34] For Tommy Tift,

Sr., who worked and lived in Atlanta and owned the ancestral homestead in Mystic but whose greatest joy came from his frequent visits to Tifton, the choice was not so easy. Little wonder he sought professional help at a critical stage of his early life!

Once he got his bearings, Tommy Tift realized his identity as a businessman and that his place was in the South. It was the same kind of Yankee business values that other Tifts retained in a less obvious way but were brought to bear on South Georgia and contributed most to their success. "It's an interesting family," observes Sue McGough, "coming into the wilderness when there was nothing there and getting everything done. Nelson was just full of Yankee energy, and he really took up with the South." In this sense, Nelson developed a double-consciousness that reflects what Wilber Caldwell (echoing C. Vann Woodward) calls "the divided mind of rural Georgia, the conflict between Old South and New, between town and country, between tradition and progress."[35] It was a coping mechanism that developed initially out of a need for protective coloring, but once perfected under Nelson served as a model for subsequent generations of Tifts to maximize the benefits of both worlds. On the one hand, they employed their Yankee energy, ingenuity, and confidence to create and sustain their myriad enterprises, while they also used those same qualities to entrench themselves in a culture that was in many ways contrary to those core values and to take the lead in preserving and defending it. That they were so successful in both should not obscure the cognitive dissonance they must have experienced. If, as James Cobb suggests, the South owed much of its regional identity to an "antithetical North—affluent, confident, and rational," one can metaphorically understand how those same cultural ingredients served as terms of reference for generations of family members whose identity depended on concealing their Yankee origins and extolling the virtues of their present way of life.[36] Most Tifts were able to reconcile any *arriere pensee* or sense of cultural hypocrisy by establishing a new and more complex dynamic of leadership. The experience of the Tifts and others of a Northern frame of mind thereby contributes another ingredient, not so readily apparent, to our understanding of the South's distinctive civilization.

Notes

Introduction

[1] Florence King, *Southern Ladies and Gentlemen* (New York: Stein and Day, 1975) 12.

[2] James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora. How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005) 9.

[3] Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life, The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) 85.

[4] George B. Tindall, *The Ethnic Southerners* (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1976) 86. Other scholars whose works have shaped our understanding of Southern distinctiveness include Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Random House, 1941); C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History* (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1960); and John Shelton Reed, *Southerners, The Social Psychology of Sectionalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

[5] William H. McNeill, "Mythistory, or Truth, Myth, History, and Historians," *The American Historical Review* 91/1 (February 1986): 6. Scholars who would attribute a mythical quality to the conception of the South include William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee, The Old South and American National Character* (New York: A. Braziller, 1961); Howard Odum, *Southern Regions of the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936); Richard N. Current, *Northernizing the South* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1983); and James Cobb, *Redefining Southern Culture, Mind and Identity in the Modern South* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1999).

[6] The classic exposition of the "Other," as an interpretive tool for explaining identity formation is Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). As James Cobb notes, "identity typically refers to a *perception* of reality rather than to reality itself," and historically "identities have not existed in isolation, but always in relation to other perceived oppositional identities against which they are defined." *Away Down South, A History of Southern Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 6.

[7] Lewis M. Killian, *White Southerners* (Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985) 16.

[8] Philip H. Bagenal, *The American Irish and Their Influence on Irish Politics* (London: K. Paul, Trench, 1882) 31–32. Also see Joseph Schafer, *The Social History of American Agriculture* (New York: Macmillan, 1936) 211, 219.

[9] C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1951) 299.

[10] Odum, *Southern Regions*, 475.

[11] Howard R. Floan, *The South in Northern Eyes, 1831 to 1861* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1973) 50, 89.

[12] Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion, Northerners and the South, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993) 141, and David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion, The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001) 138.

[13] See Hinton Rowan Helper, *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It* (New York: A. B. Burdick, 1860) 304, and Odum, *Southern Regions*, 463.

[14] An analysis of mid-twentieth-century census data by Henry Shryock and Charles Nam shows that despite the relatively high educational level of Southern migrants to the North, the higher quality of Yankees who came South carried with it a greater potential for change. Henry S. Shryock, Jr. and Charles B. Nam, "Educational Selectivity of Interregional Migration," *Social Forces* 43/3 (March 1965): 299–310.

[15] Sheldon Hackney, "Southern Violence," *American Historical Review* 74/3 (February 1969): 924–25.

[16] Albert Bushnell Hart, *The Southern South* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1910) 59.

[17] Fletcher M. Green, *The Role of the Yankee in the Old South* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1972) 1, 4, 6. For his characterization of regional differences in behavior, Green draws on William Taylor's *Cavalier and Yankee*.

[18] Green, *The Role of the Yankee*, 5–6.

[19] Current, *Northernizing the South*, 35–36. Even as late as the 1940s Thomas Sancton observes that "it is one of the ironies of history that the real Southern Yankees...are the most strident of all in their devotion to states' rights and race purity." See his "Southern Yankees," *South Today* 7/3 (Spring 1943): 18.

[20] Clement Eaton, *A History of the Old South, The Emergence of a Reluctant Nation* (New York: Macmillan, 1975) 404.

[21] John Egerton, *The Americanization of Dixie: The Southernization of America* (New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1974) 18–19. In a refinement of this thesis, James Gregory argues that Egerton "did not quite understand the wiring, but he had a nice way of labeling the dual effects." Gregory, *Southern Diaspora*, 328.

[22] Killian, *White Southerners*, 84–87.

[23] Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson, *Jews in the South* (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1973) 10, and David Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815–1877* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) 8, 121. For similar observations by an Asian American, see Choong Soon Kim, *An Asian Anthropologist in the South, Field Experiences with Blacks, Indians and Whites* (Knoxville TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1977) 62–63.

[24] Killian, *White Southerners*, 70 and 78.

[25] Lawrence N. Powell, *New Masters, Northern Planters during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1980) 135, 142.

[26] Richard N. Current, *Those Terrible Carpetbaggers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 425.

[27] Charles Hoffmann and Tess Hoffmann, *North by South, The Two Lives of Richard James Arnold* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988) 230–31.

[28] See Ann Patton Malone, "Piney Woods Farmers of South Georgia, 1850–1900: Jeffersonian Yeomen in an Age of Expanding Commercialism," *Agricultural History* 60/4 (Fall 1986): 51–84; Jerry W. DeVine, "Town Development in Wiregrass Georgia, 1870–1900," *Journal of Southwest Georgia History* I (Fall 1983): 1–22; and Mark Wetherington, *The New South Comes to Wiregrass Georgia, 1860–1910* (Knoxville TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1994).

[29] Malone, "Piney Woods Farmers," 78, and Douglas Flamming, *Creating the Modern South, Millhands & Managers in Dalton, Georgia, 1884–1984* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992) xxvii.

[30] Studies of paternalism have appeared on a variety of levels. An international perspective is provided in A. P. Thornton, *The Habit of Authority, Paternalism in British History* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966) and Howard Newby, *The Deferential Worker: A Study of Farm Workers in East Anglia* (London: Allen Lane, 1977). For its prevalence and transformation in the rural South, see Lee J. Alston and Joseph P. Ferrie, *Southern Paternalism and the American Welfare State, Economics, Politics, and Institutions in the South, 1865–1965* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Melton Alonza McLaurin's *Paternalism and Protest, Southern Cotton Mill Workers and Organized Labor, 1875–1905* (Westport CT: Greenwood Publishing, 1971) and Douglas Flamming's *Creating the Modern South* are among the many studies of industrial paternalism. A racial perspective is furnished by Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll, The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1976) and Mary R. Jackman, *The Velvet Glove, Paternalism and Conflict in Gender, Class, and Race Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). For an excellent bibliography, see James J. Lorence, "The Workers of Chicopee: Progressive Paternalism and the Culture of Accommodation in a Modern Mill Village," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 91/3 (Fall 2007): 293.

[31] R. Earl Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants, 1630–1974* (Ann Arbor MI: Cleveland Edwards Brothers, 1975); Timothy Nathan Tefft, *A Record of Some of the Descendants of John Tefft of Portsmouth and Pettaquamscutt, Rhode Island* (Lisbon Falls ME: privately printed compact disk, 2004); A Craig Anthony, *The Tefft Family and the Narragansett Controversy, A Window to the Creation of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations* (Kingston RI: privately printed, 1998); and James P. Baughman, *The Mallorys of Mystic, Six Generations in American Maritime Enterprise* (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1972). See also Anthony's

historical novel, *King's Province, Samuel Tefft's Narrative of the Narragansett Country* (Kingston RI: privately printed, 2005), based largely on his earlier account.

[32] John Viele, *The Florida Keys, The Wreckers* (Sarasota FL: Pineapple Press, 2001).

[33] Thronateeska Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, *History and Reminiscences of Dougherty County, Georgia* (Albany GA: Herald, 1924), and Ida Belle Williams, *History of Tift County* (Macon GA: J. W. Burke Co., 1948).

[34] Susan E. O'Donovan, ed., "The Journal of Nelson," *Journal of Southwest Georgia History*, 1985–1997, 3 (Fall 1985) 64–100; 4 (Fall 1986) 90–121; 5 (Fall 1987) 64–75; 6 (Fall 1988) 21–40; 7 (1989–1992) 81–106; 8 (Fall 1993) 47–69; 10 (Fall 1995) 67–83; 11 (Fall 1996) 82–102; and 12 (Fall 1997) 65–77. See Jackman reference in footnote 30.

[35] Cobb, *Redefining Southern Culture*, 6.

[36] Ellington White, "The View from the Window," cited by Robert B. Vance, "The Southern Family Today," in Robert West Howard, *This Is the South* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1959) 254.

[37] Albert E. Van Dusen, *Connecticut* (New York: Random House, 1961) 191–203.

[38] Charles M. Andrews, "On Some Early Aspects of Connecticut History," *New England Quarterly* (March 1944): 22–23.

Chapter One

[1] Andrews, "On Some Early Aspects of Connecticut History," 23.

[2] Maria E. Maxon Tift, *A Partial Record of the Descendants of John Tefft, of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, and the Nearly Complete Record of the Descendants of John Tefft, of Nassau, New York* (Buffalo: Peter Paul Book Co., 1896) 7–8; Rachel Saul Tefft, *The Descendants of John Tefft (1614–1676)* (Salem MA: Higginson Book Co., 1997) 2–3; Darlene Tefft Cobb and Timothy Nathan Tefft, "Tefft Coat of Arms," *Newsletter of the Tefft Family Association* 3/1 (Winter 2002): 1, 4–5.

[3] Tefft Family Vertical File, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Biog.T259z; John Osborne Austin, *The Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode, Comprising Three Generations of Settlers Who Came Before 1690* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1969) 39; and Timothy Nathan Tefft, "A Partial List of the Descendants of John Tefft of Rhode Island," unpublished typescript in the Pettaquamscutt Historical Society, Kingston, Rhode Island.

[4] Marjorie Webster Schunke, "The Tefft Cemetery," *The Pettaquamscutt Reporter* 32/3 (Winter 1999): 9; John R. Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, 10 vols. (Providence: A. Crawford Greene & Brothers, 1856) 1:300; and A. Craig Anthony, "The Early Teffts of South Kingstown," *The Pettaquamscutt Reporter* 32/3 (Winter 1999): 4.

[5] For general accounts on King Philip's War, see Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk, New England in King Philip's War* (New York:

Macmillan, 1959); George W. Ellis and John E. Morris, *King Philip's War* (New York: The Grafton Press, 1906); Jill Lepore, *The Name of War, King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); Eric B. Schultz and Michael J. Tougias, *King Philip's War, The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict* (Woodstock VT: Countryman Press, 1999); and James D. Drake, *King Philip's War, Civil War in New England, 1675–1676* (Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

[6] Williams to Leverett, 14 January 1676, letter by Captain James Oliver in 1676, and "Harris Cemetery Survey of South Kingstown Cemeteries, 1880," cited by John C. Thrasher, "More About Joshua Tefft's Execution," *The Pettaquamscutt Reporter* 32/3 (Winter 1999): 7. For original text from the nine documents relating to the fate of Joshua Tefft, see Francis J. Sypher, Jr., "Joshua Tefft an 'English Indian,' Documents from King Philip's War," *New England Ancestors* 6/2 (Spring 2005): 25–29.

[7] Lepore, *The Name of War*, 136. Francis Sypher concurs that the evidence against Tefft "would have been overwhelming." Sypher, "Joshua Tefft," 29.

[8] George Bodge, *Soldiers in the King Philip's War* (Leominster MA: privately printed, 1896), 194, and J. H. Temple, *History of the Town of Brookfield, Massachusetts* (North Brookfield MA: North Brookfield Town, 1887), 116, cited in A. Craig Anthony, *The Tefft Family and the Narragansett Controversy, A Window to the Creation of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations* (Kingston RI: privately printed, 1998), 9–10.

[9] Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* 1:161–62, cited in ibid., 11.

[10] Ibid., 4. "There is no definitive evidence that Sarah Tefft was the illegitimate daughter of John Greene of Warwick," concludes Craig Anthony, but "both the archeological and documentary evidence strongly suggest that this is indeed the case."

[11] *Rhode Island Court Records—Records of the Court of Trials of the Colony of Providence Plantations, 1662–1670* (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Society, 1922) 2: 74–92, 97–98, cited in Anthony, *The Tefft Family*, 5–7.

[12] Will of John Tefft, 30 November 1674, and tax records of Samuel Tift, cited in Tift, *Partial Record*, 11 and 15; and Anthony, "The Early Teffts," 5.

[13] Will of Samuel Tefft, 16 March 1725, Town Council and Probate Records, 1723–1735, South Kingstown, Wakefield, Rhode Island 2: 29–39.

[14] For details on the Connecticut-Rhode Island boundary dispute see Van Dusen, *Connecticut*, 91–93.

[15] Anthony, *The Tefft Family*, 15–16.

[16] Ibid.; Deposition of Samuel Tefft, Westerly Town Council & Probate Records, 3:5X:202; and Tefft, *A Record of Some of the Descendants*, 45, 80.

[17] Will of Samuel Tefft, 16 March 1725, and will of John Tefft (with codicil), 22 December 1757, cited in Tift, *Partial Record*, 15–16, 19, 27–28; Will of Samuel Tefft, 16 March 1725, cited in Thrasher, "Some Tefft Wills," 11, 14–15.

[18] Anthony, *The Tefft Family*, 17.

[19] For examples of alternative interpretations of the Tift line of descent from John and Samuel, see the *Genealogical and Biographical Record of New London County, Connecticut* (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1905) 157–58, 584–85, and Charles H. W. Stocking, *The Tefft Ancestry Comprising Many Hitherto Unpublished Records of Descendants of John Tefft of Portsmouth, Rhode Island* (Deep River CT: Lakeside Press, 1904) 3–22.

[20] See marriage and birth records for Richmond in the Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, cited in James N. Arnold, *Vital Records of Rhode Island, 1636–1850, Births, Marriages and Deaths*, First Series, 21 vols. (Providence: Narragansett Historical Publishing Co., 1894) 5/6:19, 34; Stocking, *The Tefft Ancestry*, 18; and Wills of Joseph Teftt, Jr., 24 June 1778, Probate and Council Records, Richmond, Rhode Island 2: 256–60, and Joseph Tefft, III, 14 January 1812, ibid. 3: 34.

[21] Interview with A. Craig Anthony, Kingston, Rhode Island, 18 June 2005.

[22] Statement by Solomon Tift in application for pension for military service, 30 August 1832, Revolutionary War Records, National Archives, Number S14703, and genealogical record entitled "Jonathan Brewster," 62, cited from photocopies in the Catherine Tift Porter Papers, Atlanta, Georgia.

[23] See Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1377–1380. An example of the frustrations of genealogists is provided in a letter from C. F. Griffin to a Tift family member in 1925 after examining the records at the Westerly library. "I am writing promptly concerning the Lucy Brewster—Joseph Tift problem. There are 27 Lucy Brewsters mentioned in the two volumes. None married Tifts." C. F. Griffin to Miss Wheeler, 16 September 1925, Stonington Historical Society, Stonington, Connecticut.

[24] Charles R. Stark, *Groton, CT, 1705–1905* (Stonington CT: Palmer Press, 1922), cited in a letter from Andrew D. Boisvert to Catherine Tift Porter, 15 October 1997, Porter Papers, and Statement by Solomon Tift, Revolutionary War Records.

[25] "1977 Military Census, South Kingstown, Rhode Island," in Mildred M. Chamberlain, *The Rhode Island 1977 Military Census* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co. 1985) 102, and Military Returns, S.A. 4: 5, S.A. 4: 58, and S.A. 3: 8, Rhode Island State Archives.

[26] A set of revolutionary rolls in the state archives indicates that Solomon was a private in the Kingstown Reds in May 1776. See Edward Field, *Revolutionary Defences in Rhode Island* (Providence RI: Preston and Rounds, 1896) 115. Solomon's testimony, however, states that his term of service only began in March 1777.

[27] Revolutionary War service records show that Solomon responded to muster roll call seven times at Tiverton between June 1778 and March 1779. National Archives, Morrow, Georgia, M881 876.

[28] Statement by Solomon Tift, Revolutionary War Records; Statement by Solomon Tift, City Court Records of New London, 4 February 1833, cited in Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants* 2: 1379, and Revolutionary War Pension Files, National Archives, M804, 2388. The colonial government also granted Solomon four pounds, twelve shillings, and six pence for special services rendered to the General Assembly in this period. Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island*, 8: 211, 385.

[29] L. H. Starr to Jane Harding Dean, 27 August 1881, Porter Papers.

[30] Statements by Nelson Tift and other members of the Tift family, cited in Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1377.

[31] Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Files, M804 2388.

[32] By this time, argues historian Richard Bushman, a secularization of society whereby "Connecticut Puritans became Yankees" was virtually complete. It featured a "release of energy" that "transformed the quality of Connecticut life. In the century after the Revolution Yankee society produced a flowering of individualism, a magnificent display of economic and artistic virtuosity. Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee, Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690–1765* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1967) ix and 288.

[33] Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1375, 1378.

[34] Ibid., 1380, 1383–84. Four Joseph Tifts appear in the service records for the War of 1812, two each from Connecticut and New York. All are regimental privates, and there is no indication of any naval service. See Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the War of 1812, National Archives, M 602/209.

[35] Baughman, *Mallorys of Mystic*, 14.

[36] William N. Peterson, *"Mystic Built," Ships and Shipyards of the Mystic River, Connecticut, 1784–1919* (Mystic CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1989) 2–3.

[37] Clift to Tift, 14 July 1801, Forseth-Tift Collection, 1758–1846, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Connecticut, 277 1/8.

[38] Peterson, "*Mystic Built*," 2–3, and Charles R. Schultz to Mildred T. Rosam, 19 June 1969, Tift File, #77, Key West, Monroe County Public Library, Key West.

[39] *Savannah Georgian*, 24 March 1828, and Testimony by James F. Forsyth, Albany, Georgia, November, 1969, in the *New Orleans Genesis* 11 (March 1972): 150.

[40] Amos Tift to Hannah Tift, 13 January 1817 [1818], Forseth-Tift Collection, G. W. Blunt White Library, 277 1/9.

[41] Account books for Amos Tift, 1823–1825, Mallory Family Papers, ibid., vol. 41.

[42] "Memorial to Congress by Inhabitants of Key West," 29 December 1826, Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States, The Territory of Florida, 1824–1828*, 23 (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1958) 702.

[43] Jefferson B. Browne, *Key West, The Old and the New* (Gainesville FL: University of Florida Press, 1973) 7, 9.

[44] "Dorothy Dodd, "The Wrecking Business on the Florida Reef, 1822–1860," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 22/4 (April 1944): 172–73.

[45] Viele, *The Florida Keys*, 14–28, xii. For an assessment of wreckers, see E. A. Hammond, "Wreckers and Wrecking on the Florida Reef, 1829–1832," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 41/3 (January 1963) 239–73.

[46] See Dodd, "The Wrecking Business," 173, and "What I Saw at Key West," *New York Tribune*, cited in the *Albany Patriot*, 7 May 1852.

[47] "The House of A. F. & C. Tift," *Key of the Gulf*, cited in the *Mystic Press*, 15 March 1875, clipping in the Asa Tift/Key West file, Florida Collection, Monroe County Public Library; Testimony by James F. Forsyth, 150; and "New Goods," *Key West Register*, 13 March 1829.

[48] See "Memorial to Congress," 29 December 1826, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 23: 702; "Petition to Congress by Inhabitants of Key West," 4 January 1828, ibid., 989; and "Memorial to Congress by Inhabitants of Key West," 10 January 1829, ibid., 24: 136.

[49] *Seventh Census of the United States*, 1850, Florida, Monroe County, vol. 2; Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants* 2: 1473–74; and "List of Suits in the Territorial Supreme Court," May 1827, Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 23: 850.

[50] Mortality figures for Key West from 1829 to 1837 were: 1829, 49; 1830, 14; 1831, 22; 1832, 21; 1833, 27; 1834, 30; 1835, 13; 1836, 16; 1837, 21. Walter C. Maloney, *A Sketch of the History of Key West, Florida* (Gainesville FL: University of Florida Press, 1968) 47–48.

[51] Kevin E. Kearney, ed., "Autobiography of William Marvin," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 36/3 (January 1958): 201.

[52] Asa Tift to Mother, Brothers & Sisters, 13 July 1829, Mallory Family Papers, Collection 5, 1/1, and "Eighty-Second Birthday," *Mystic Pioneer*, 12 October 1867.

Chapter Two

[1] D. R. Hundley, *Social Relations in Our Southern States* (New York: H. B. Price, 1860) 131, 157.

[2] *Key West Gazette*, 20 April 1831.

[3] "Presentments of the Grand Jury of the Superior Court of the Southern Judicial District," 29 May 1830, in Carter, *Territorial Papers* 24: 417–18; "Petition to Congress by Merchants and Others of Key West," 10 January 1835, ibid., 25: 91–92; "Memorial to Congress by Inhabitants of Key West," 16 November 1835, ibid., 196–97; "Remonstrance to Congress by Inhabitants of Monroe and Dade Counties," February 1836, ibid., 241–42; "Petition to Congress by Inhabitants of Monroe County," 1 March 1836, ibid., 247; and "Remonstrance to Congress by Inhabitants of Monroe County, n.d., 1836, 253.

[4] "Election Notice," *Key West Inquirer*, 5 September 1835, and 27 February 1836, and Parish Register of St. Paul Episcopal, 25 December 1832, Monroe County Public Library.

[5] Browne, *Key West*, 223, and Maloney, *History of Key West*, 19.

[6] Viele, *Florida Keys, The Wreckers*, 55.

[7] "Evils—No. II," *Key West Inquirer*, 19 September 1835.

[8] Charles Walker to Timothy and Lydia Walker, 1 February 1838, in Kenneth Scott, "The City of Wreckers—Key West Letters of 1838," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 25/2 (October 1946): 193.

[9] "Statement," *Key West Inquirer*, 9 January 1836.

[10] Viele, *Florida Keys*, 57.

[11] Ibid., 36, 48–49, 55. Also see Maureen Ogle, *Key West, History of an Island of Dreams* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003) 33.

[12] Key West Architecture, Historical American Buildings Survey, FLA 44-FLA-179, Book #1, Monroe County Public Library, and Browne, *Key West*, 8, 12, 27.

[13] "Nominations to Territorial Offices," 6 February 1838, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 25: 475.

[14] See for instance "Salvage received from Clerk of Court in Division in Brig. Black Hawk," May 1839, Mallory Family Papers, G. W. Blunt White Library, vol. 19.

[15] Asa Tift's firm was also named by Fish as one of the correspondents "for whom we transacted business and filled orders for family stores and trade necessities." James D. Fish, *Memoirs of Early Business Life & Associates* (Mystic CT: privately printed, 1907) 11–12.

[16] Kathleen Greenhalgh, *A History of Old Mystic, 1600–1999* (Waterford CT: Impact Image Inc., 1999) 133, 138, 179–82.

[17] Mallory to Tift, 1 October 1839, Porter Papers.

[18] Ogle, *Key West*, 21.

[19] Amos to Phebe Tift, 30 October 1839, Porter Papers.

[20] Ibid., 14 November 1839.

[21] Ibid., 14 and 27 December 1839.

[22] Phebe's infrequent correspondence might be attributed to lack of grammar skills. Little of her writing survives, but a letter to her son Orville, nearly two decades after her marriage, reveals run-on sentences, noun/verb disagreements, and improper punctuation and capitalization, all in striking contrast to her husband's command of the language. Lack of literacy skills, and accompanying embarrassment, might explain her reticence and also why Amos was always sending and recommending books for her self improvement. Phebe to Orville Tift, 19 May 1856, ibid.

[23] Amos to Phebe Tift, 3 and 26 January 1840, ibid.

[24] Ibid., 9 and 15 March 1840.

[25] Ibid., 28 March and 3 April 1840.

[26] Interestingly the earliest Tift ties with Georgia preceded Nelson's arrival by two decades. Israel Keech Tefft, son of Israel and Ruth Eddy Tefft, was born in Smithfield, Rhode Island, in 1794. His father, presumably like Solomon Tift, was a great grandson of Peter Tefft, offspring of the notorious Joshua Tefft. Israel journeyed South in 1815 to enter the hardware trade, importing his merchandise from New Haven. After bankruptcy in the wake of the Panic of 1819, he became editor and owner of the *Georgian*, a Savannah daily, then took a position with the Bank of the State of Georgia, where he remained for the rest of his life, eventually becoming cashier. As Tefft accrued wealth and social standing, he engaged in civic affairs. But his foremost contribution to his adopted city and state was his role in forming the Georgia Historical Society in 1839. The decision to create it was made in his home on St. Julian Street. As its secretary for the next twenty-three years, Tefft was regarded as its "most active, zealous and liberal patron." He also became a savant who hosted and corresponded with the leading literary figures of his day and assembled a personal library and autograph collection deemed to be the largest in the world. "Such was Tefft's renown," notes William Bragg, "that no celebrated writer came to Savannah without a letter of introduction to him." Despite his Yankee origins, Tefft was inclined towards the South and even volunteered, upon the outbreak of the Civil War, at sixty-seven, to serve in the Savannah Artillery. As to whether there was any communication between the Teffts and the Tifts, newspaper notices indicate that the vessels of Amos Tift frequented the port of Savannah as early as 1821 on voyages between New York and the West Indies. Invariably the captain's name is spelled "Tefft," Savannah-style, signifying some degree of familiarity. As for Nelson and Asa, there is no indication of any contact with Israel, either in Albany or Savannah. "I. K. Tefft, Esq.," *Savannah Republican*, 2 July 1862; J. D. Wickham to I. K. Tefft, 4 December 1815, and 9 March 1816, Letterbook, Israel Keech Tefft Papers, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah; Timothy J. Haeussler, "The Life of I. K. Tefft" (unpublished manuscript, 1983), ibid.; Minutes, 14 July 1862, Tefft biographical file, ibid.; Leonard L. Mackall, *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 2/2 (June 1918): 65–86; Anthony R. Dees, "Israel Keech Tefft," in Kenneth C. Coleman and Charles Stephen Gurr, eds., *Dictionary of Georgia Biography*, 2 vols. (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1983) 2:964; William Harris Bragg, *De Renne, Three Generations of a Georgia Family* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1999) 21; Paul M. Pressly, "The Northern Roots of Savannah's Antebellum Elite, 1780s–1850s," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 87/2 (Summer 2003): 166, 171, 177–78; and the *Georgian*, 17 July 1821, and 11 July 1822.

[27] O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift," 3 (Fall 1985): 71, 74, 76–80, 87.

[28] Ibid., 80–81, and Diary of Nelson Tift, 18 February 1869, AC 69–285, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta (hereafter cited as GDAH).

[29] According to the most authoritative account of the battle, Colonel Thomas Beall headed a force of 500, including volunteers from Central Georgia and local militiamen from Baker, Early, Stewart, Thomas, and Pulaski Counties.

"Chickasawhatchee was a significant victory for the Georgians." John Thaddeus Ellisor, *The Second Creek War: The Unexplored Conflict* (Ann Arbor MI: 1996) 203. Also see Kenneth L. Valliere, "The Creek War of 1836: A Military History," *Chronicles of Oklahoma History* 57/4 (Winter 1979): 463–85, and Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975). For coverage of Creek settlements in Southwest Georgia and their removal to Oklahoma, see Baker County Historical Society, *The History of Baker County* (Newton GA: W H Wolfe Associates, 1991) 2–18.

[30] Ellis Merton Coulter, *A Short History of Georgia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933) 210; Rupert B. Vance, *Human Geography of the South, A Study of Regional Resources and Human Adequacy* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1968) 90; and Roland M. Harper, "Development of Agriculture in Lower Georgia from 1850 to 1880," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 6/2 (June 1922): 102.

[31] James E. Callaway, *The Early Settlement of Georgia* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1948) 114–15, and Wilbur Zelinsky, "An Isochronic Map of Georgia Settlement, 1750–1850," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 35/3 (September, 1951): 194.

[32] For historical treatments on the development of Albany and Dougherty County and of the critical role played by Nelson Tift. See Thronateeska Chapter, *History and Reminiscences*; Works Progress Administration, *Historical Background of Doughterty County, 1836–1940* (Atlanta GA: Cherokee Publishing Co., 1981); Pauline Tyson Stephens, "Albany, 1836–1950," *Georgia Review* 4/1 (Spring 1950): 30–42; Carolyn Clive, Frances Davis, and Tom Liner, *Glancing Backward, Albany Georgia, 1836–1986* (Tallahassee FL: Albany Sesquicenntial Commission, 1986); Mary Ellen Bacon, *Albany on the Flint, 1836–1936* (Albany GA: Albany Town Committee of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Georgia, 1970); Joseph Kitchens, C. Stephen Gurr, and Jennifer Hape, *Generations, The Story of Albany* (Montgomery AL: Community Communications, 1998); and a special bicentennial supplement to the *Albany Sunday Herald*, 26 October 1986. For biographical sketches of Nelson Tift, see "Nelson Tift" in Allen D. Candler and Clement A Evans, eds. *Cyclopedia of Georgia*, 4 vols. (Atlanta GA: State Historical Association, 1906) 4:295–98; "Nelson Tift," in Lucian Lamar Knight, *A Standard History of Georgia and Georgians*, 6 vols. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1917) 5:2, 909–10; H. B. Fant, "Tift, Nelson" in Kenneth Coleman and Charles Stephen Gurr, eds. *Dictionary of Georgia Biography*, 2 vols. (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1983) 2:981–82; and an undocumented but entertaining "biographical novel" by Robert P. Dews, *Gentle Connecticut Georgian (The Colonel Came To Stay), 1776–1836* (Edison GA: Rebel Books, 1981). The most revealing information on Tift is Susan O'Donovan's edition of "The Journal of Nelson Tift" in successive issues of the *Journal of Southwest Georgia History*.

[33] Nelson Tift, "History of Albany," *Camenman Chimes*, n.d., newspaper clipping David Sherman Papers, Arlington VA. For an unsubstantiated account crediting Shotwell see http://albany.ga.us/finance/Budget%20documents/Introduction.pdf.

[34] O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift," 3 (Fall 1985): 96–100, and 4 (Fall 1986): 93, 97, 99; and Edward A. Mueller, *Perilous Journeys: A History of Steamboating on the Chattahoochee, Apalachicola, and Flint Rivers, 1828–1928* (Eufaula AL: Historic Chattahoochee Committee, 1990) 43.

[35] "Diary" of Nelson Tift, No. 1219, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, cited in Henry P. Owens, "Apalachiacola: The Beginning," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 47/3 (January 1969): 288.

[36] A. T. Havens Journal, 29 April 1843, and John Jones to Howell Cobb, 15 February 1851, Cobb-Erwin-Lamar Papers, University of Georgia. See also William N. Thurston, "The Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Transportation Route in the Nineteenth Century," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 57/2 (Summer 1973): 200–13.

[37] Annie Maria's uncle, Jesse Mercer, was Georgia's most noted Baptist minister of the early nineteenth century. He was moderator of the Georgia Baptist Association for twenty-three years, an organizer and then president of the Georgia Baptist Convention for nineteen years, and first president of the board of trustees of Mercer University, which was named after him. "Jesse Mercer's name properly comes first on any list of those who helped to lay the foundations of Baptist education in Georgia or to promote other denominational interests," according to B. D. Ragsdale in *Story of Georgia Baptists*, 2 vols. (Atlanta: Foote & Davies Co., 1932) 1:34.

[38] O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift" 4 (Fall 1986): 103–104, 111, 115.

[39] Thomas Harrold to D. A Valentine, 14 October 1836, and Nancy L. Fogle to J. P. Turner, 28 August 1835, Harrold Papers, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, box 1, folders 4 and 5, and Bradley Hale to the author, 23 December 2004, letter in author's possession.

[40] O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift," 4 (Fall 1986): 107, 111, 115, 117, 119–20.

[41] See Robert B. Gressette, *A History of the Ocmulgee and Flint Railroad* (Tifton GA: RB Publishing Co., 2002), 13–32, and O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift" 4 (Fall 1986): 108–109.

[42] Ibid., 5 (Fall 1987), 72, 74–75, and *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia*, 1841 (Milledgeville GA: np, 1842), 81, 407, and O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift" 6 (Fall 1988): 27, 30, 35, 37.

[43] Amos to Phebe Tift, 18 January 1841, Porter Papers.

[44] Ibid., 7, 15, and 23 November 1843.

[45] Ibid., 30 November 1843.

[46] O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift," 5 (Fall 1987): 69, 73; 7 (1989–1992): 103–106; and 8 (Fall 1993): 47–52; Gressette, *History of the Ocmulgee and Flint Railroad*,

33–36, 39–43; and Tift to Governor Charles J. McDonald, 28 October 1843, Tift Papers, GDAH, File II, Doc-2166/159.

[47] O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift," 7 (1989–1992): 81.

[48] See Frances Pynchon to Sister, 3 April 1826, Forseth-Tift Papers, 277/1/11; and Frances Pynchon to Sisters, 16 April 1845, and Daniel Pynchon to Brother, 27 September 1842, Mallory Family Papers, 5, 1/1.

[49] O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift," 7 (1989–1992): 97.

[50] Ibid., 5 (Fall 1987): 70; 7 (1989–1992): 92, 99–100; and Joseph S. Davis, "Reminiscent or Historical Observations Personal and Impersonal, The Albany Baptist Church," Dougherty County Public Library, Albany GA.

[51] "Prospectus," *Albany Patriot*, 16 April 1845 and "Whigs and Democrats," ibid., 30 April 1845. Several years later Tift was considered to be worth as much as $20,000 and good for his contracts, but Boughton, a "broken merchant" and man of "no means," was not. Report on Nelson Tift, 5 July 1847, and 11 February 1848, Dougherty County, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University Business School, 10/231.

[52] "Educate Your Children," *Albany Patriot*, 11 June 1845; "State System of Common Schools," ibid., 12 November 1845; and "Education," ibid., 7 December 1845.

[53] "Rail Roads—South-Western Georgia," ibid., 3 February 1847, Les R. Winn, *Ghost Trains and Depots of Georgia (1833–1933)* (Chamblee GA: Big Shanty Publishing, 1995) 11, 15, 24, 100, and David Sherman to the author, 24 August 2006, letter in author's possession.

[54] "South Western Rail Road" and "Rail Road Meeting," *Albany Patriot*, 3 February 1849; "The proper route for a Railroad," ibid., 18 March 1849; "Organization of the Savannah and Albany Rail Road Company," ibid., 2 November 1849, and "Savannah and Albany Railroad," ibid., 26 November 1852. For details on Albany's long struggle to acquire railroad connections for its agricultural products, see WPA, *Historical Background of Dougherty County*, 11–17.

[55] *Albany Patriot*, 24 October 1851, 21 October 1853. See also Baker County Historical Society, *History of Baker County*, 46–47.

[56] See typescript entitled "Asa Forsythe Tift" in possession of Betty Skinner, Ponte Viedre, Florida, and " Executive Nominations for Territorial Appointment," 4 February 1841, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 26: 254.

[57] "The House of A. F. & C. Tift," *Key of the Gulf*, 15 March 1875.

[58] Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1455, and Key West Architecture, Historical American Buildings Survey, FLA 44-FLA-179, Book #4, Monroe County Public Library.

[59] Lucius Tift to Sisters, 6 April 1845, Mallory Family Papers, 277, 1/10.

[60] David Hackley Diaries, 9 October and 22 August 1853, Monroe County Public Library.

[61] Report on Asa Tift, 14 June 1852, Monroe Co., Florida, Dun Collection, 6/119.

[62] Parish Register of St. Paul Episcopal Church, Deaths, and Hackley Diaries, 14 May 1855.

[63] Ibid., 26 May 1854, 24 July 1855, and 21 and 23 April 1856.

[64] Ibid., 20 September 1855.

[65] *Key to the Gulf*, 16 May 1859, cited in Betty Bruce to Earl Burrows, 5 April 1971, Tift File, #77, Monroe County Public Library.

[66] "The Abolitionists," *Albany Patriot*, 23 April 1845; "People of the South Moving," ibid., 10 March 1849; "Personal," ibid., 22 September 1847; and "Rejoinder to the Courier," ibid., 29 September 1847.

[67] "African Slavery," ibid., 26 April 1850, and O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift," 12 (Fall 1997): 65.

[68] Likely as a result of this ownership and lack of an alternative identity, many blacks acquired the Tift surname. Albany Baptist Church records for 1 July 1870 reveal only two white female Tifts, Kate and Mrs. J. M., whereas nine black males and females, Paul, Brown, William, Cipio, Moses, Charlotte (twice), Silvey, and Eliza, are named Tift. *Albany Baptist Church Book, 1860–1870*, Dougherty County Public Library.

[69] "Dougherty County—Its Statistics," *Albany Patriot*, 11 December 1856; "Dougherty and Houston Counties Compared," ibid., 19 February 1857, and Department of the Census, Department of Commerce, *Negro Population, 1790–1915* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1919).

[70] "Southern Rights Meeting," *Albany Patriot*, 27 June 1851; "The Democratic Party," ibid., 2 January 1852; "Editorial Correspondence," ibid., 19 December 1851; "The Slavery Question," ibid., 24 April 1856; and "Southern Convention at Savannah," ibid., 30 October 1856.

[71] O'Donovan, "Journal of Tift," 12 (Fall 1997): 69, and Lee W. Formwalt, "Bridge House Links Albany to Its Infancy," *Albany Sunday Herald*, 26 October 1986. R. G. Dun & Co. estimated Nelson's cost for the bridge at $12,000, but it would "pay him finely." Report on Nelson Tift, 4 October 1858, Dougherty County, Dun Collection, 10/231.

[72] John S. Lupold and Thomas L. French, Jr., *Bridging Deep South Rivers, The Life and Legend of Horace King* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004) 147, and Diary of A. J. Swinney, 10 October 1858, David Sherman Papers.

[73] "Bridge at Albany," *Albany Patriot*, 23 September 1858; "New Advertisements," ibid., 18 March 1858; Baker County Historical Society, *The History of Baker County*, 27; and Wilber Caldwell, *The Courthouse and the Depot, The Architecture of Hope in an Age of Despair* (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 2001) 179.

[74] Albany City Council Minutes, 24 April and 18 December 1858, City/County Courthouse, Albany.

[75] In 1860 R. G. Dun & Co. calculated that Amos's small business was worth only about $3,000 or $4,000, in striking contrast to its 1857 estimates of Nelson's assets—$75,000 in land, $30,000 in city property, $12,800 in slaves, $300 in stocks, and $3,000 in other properties. Reports on Amos Tift for 26 September 1860, New London County, Connecticut, 45/186, and Nelson Tift, 21 July 1857, Dougherty County, Georgia, Dun Collection, 10/231.

[76] Amos to Orville Tift, 19 May 1858, Porter Papers.

Chapter Three

[1] General George Anderson Mercer Diaries, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, 14 March 1862, #503, file 3.

[2] *Albany Patriot*, 18 April 1861, and Clement Eaton, *A History of the Southern Confederacy* (New York: Free Press, 1954) 31.

[3] Lee W. Formwalt, "Planter Persistence in Southwest Georgia, 1850–1870," *Journal of Southwest Georgia History* 2 (Fall 1984): 42.

[4] *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860, Florida, Monroe County, vol. 2.

[5] Browne, *Key West*, 90–91.

[6] Kearney, "Autobiography of William Marvin," 213.

[7] Ralph A. Wooster, "The Florida Secession Convention," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 36/4 (April 1958): 375–80.

[8] Browne, *Key West*, 91–94. For a Unionist view see Maloney, *History of Key West*, 62–68.

[9] Kearney, "Autobiography of William Marvin," 201.

[10] See Joseph T. Durkin, *Stephen R. Mallory, Confederate Navy Chief* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954): 34, and J. Thomas Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy* (New York: Rogers & Sherwood, 1887), 268. Even before the outbreak of hostilities, Nelson was establishing contacts for Georgia Governor Joseph Brown with a Baltimore firm that could supply the South with improved weaponry. Tift to Brown, 19 November 1860, RG 4-2-46, File II, Names, Tift (GDAH).

[11] Bern Anderson, *By Sea and River, The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962) 28; William W. Still, *Iron Afloat, The Story of the Confederate Ironclads* (Nashville TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971) 5, 17.

[12] Stephen R. Mallory Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, 1 September 1861. See also R. Thomas Campbell, *Fire and Thunder, Exploits of the Confederate States Navy* (Shippensburg PA: Burd Street Press, 1977) 6.

[13] Ibid., 69, and Mary A. DeCredico, *Patriotism for Profit, Georgia's Urban Entrepreneurs and the Confederate War Effort* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990) 36. Discordant relations between Scofield and Markham and the Confederate government that may have contributed to delays on *The Mississippi*

are described in Thomas Dyer's *Secret Yankees, The Union Circle in Confederate Atlanta* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) 78–80.

[14] Eaton, *History of the Southern Confederacy*, 243. Also see Campbell, *Fire and Thunder*, 72–76, and Still, *Iron Afloat*, 45–46.

[15] US War Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1894–1927), series 2, 1: 535.

[16] O. J. Noyes to Nelson and Asa Tift, 25 April 1862, letter originally in the possession of the late Julia Tift Smith Oliver, Dadeville, Alabama. Copies available in the Public Information Subject File, Civil War, folder 7 in the Alabama Department of Archives and History and in the author's possession.

[17] Investigation of Navy Department, Report of Evidence Taken before a Joint Special Committee of Both Houses of the Confederate Congress to Investigate the Affairs of the Navy Department, *Official Records*, Ser. 2, 1: 600.

[18] C. H. M. Blair, "Historic Sketch of the Confederate Navy," *United Service*, 3rd series, 4 (May 1903): 1,169, cited in Maxine Turner, *Navy Gray, A Story of the Confederate Navy on the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola Rivers* (Tuscaloosa AL: University of Alabama Press, 1988) 147.

[19] Mallory Diary, 15 May 1862, and Charles L. Dufour, *The Night the War Was Lost* (Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994).

[20] James I. Waddell, *C.S.S. Shenandoah: The Memoirs of Lieutenant Commander James I. Waddell*, ed. James D. Horan (New York: Crown Publishers, 1960) 15, and *Report of Evidence*, 194–95, cited in Still, *Iron Afloat*, 59. Also see "The Great Steam Ram Mississippi...Letter from Col. Tift, 13 May 1863," in the C. B. Pritchett Papers, Canuga Corporation, Albany, Georgia.

[21] Investigation of Navy Department, *Official Records*, Ser. 2, 1: 600.

[22] Regina Rapier, "Felix Senac, Being the Legend and Biography of A Confederate Agent in Europe," *Bulletin of Art and History* 11 (1972): 96.

[23] Investigation of Navy Department, *Official Records*, Ser. 2, 1: 431–809; and Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 267. "Considerable evidence," according to Mallory's biographer, suggests that in the early stages of the war the Tifts were "on surprisingly good terms with some Yankee business firms—and with the Federal government itself." Letter books for the Mallory Steamship Line for May and June 1961, cited by Durkin, *Stephen R. Mallory*, 235–37.

[24] Investigation of Navy Department, *Official Records*, Ser. 2, 1: 601.

[25] Tift to J. Thomas Scharf, 9 June 1890, folder on *Atlanta*, Confederate Subject and Area File, National Archives Record Group 45, cited in Still, *Iron Afloat*, 128–29.

[26] T. D. Conner, *Ironwork of Savannah* (Savannah: Writeplace Press, 2004) 35.

[27] Mercer Diaries, 23 April, 17 June, and 10 July 1863. Such anti-Yankee prejudice was evident also to Robert S. Davis who notes that "a Georgia 'Southern Yankee,' native-born or imported, who achieved any technological 'first' found no

acceptance, profit, contemporary notoriety, or practical applications for his inventions," in *Cotton, Fire, and Dreams, The Robert Findlay Iron Works and Heavy Industry in Macon, Georgia, 1839–1912* (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1998) 36.

[28] Tift to Scharf, 9 June 1890.

[29] "Obituary," *Mystic Press*, 1 March 1883, and "Union Temperance Meeting," *Mystic Pioneer*, 28 April 1866.

[30] "Union Meetings," ibid., 28 March 1864, and Van Dusen, *Connecticut*, 236.

[31] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 463, and Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1399.

[32] Orville to Amos Tift, 4 November 1862, and Orville to Amos and Phebe Tift, 23 November 1862, Orville Tift Papers, Emory University Library, Collection 375.

[33] Orville to Amos and Phebe Tift, 6 and 14 December 1862, ibid.

[34] Orville to Amos and Phebe Tift, 16 December 1862, and Orville Tift to "Sister," 18 December 1862, ibid.

[35] Keith Hardison (Louisiana State Museum Director, Baton Rouge) to the author, 6 May 2005, letter in the author's possession.

[36] Orville to Amos and Phebe Tift, 19 December 1862, Orville Tift Papers, 375.

[37] Orville Tift to "Sister," 18 December 1862, ibid.

[38] Orville to Amos and Phebe Tift, 1 January 1863, ibid.

[39] Orville to "Kinsman," 10 January 1863, ibid.

[40] Orville Tift to "Sister," 23 February 1863, ibid.

[41] Orville to Amos and Phebe Tift, 25 June 1863, ibid.

[42] Orville to Amos and Phebe Tift, 21 and 25 September 1864, ibid.

[43] Orville to Amos Tift, 2 October 1864, ibid.

[44] R. G. Dun & Co. reports reinforce this impression, noting in 1864 that Amos was doing a "gd bus," amounting to about $30,000 a year. Report on Amos Tift for 25 April 1864, New London County, Connecticut, Dun Collection, 45/186.

[45] "Message from the President," *Albany Patriot*, 8 February 1865; "C.S. Naval Depot at Albany," ibid., 30 June 1864; and Albert G. Browne to Hugh McCulloch, 13 September 1865, Letters Relating to Claims Received in the Office of the Secretary of the Treasury, 1864–1887, RG 56, National Archives.

[46] Harper, "Development of Agriculture in Lower Georgia from 1850 to 1880," 115; F. N. Boney, "The Emerging Empire State, 1820–1861," in Kenneth Coleman, ed., *A History of Georgia* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991) 166; and Thronateeska DAR, *History and Reminiscences*, 54.

[47] David Williams, Teresa Crisp Williams, and David Carlson, *Plain Folk in a Rich Man's War, Class and Dissent in Confederate Georgia* (Gainesville FL: University Press of Florida, 2002) 42–44.

[48] "Mr. Hienan," *Albany Patriot*, 6 April 1865, and "Quite a City," ibid., 23 March 1865.

[49] William Warren Rogers, ed., "Nelson Tift Applies for Pardon 1865," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 51/2 (June 1967), 231. David Blight estimates that over 15,000 Southerners sought individual pardons and that 7,000 covered by the $20,000 provision received them by 1866. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 45. See also Royce Shingleton, "Tift Urged Albanians to Accept Surrender," *Albany Sunday Herald*, 26 October 1986.

[50] Stephen Mallory to Ruby Mallory, 6 July 1866, Mallory Papers, Pensacola Historical Society.

[51] See C. C. Hicks, 10 December 1867, and Charles Rauschenberg to Tift, 18 February and 27 March 1868, Records of the Field Offices for the State of Georgia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1872, RG 105, Reel 37, National Archives.

[52] Nelson Tift, T. H. Johnston, and John A. Davis to Howard, 11 June 1867, Reel 38, and Rauschenberg to Howard, 14 November 1867, ibid., Reel 35.

[53] WPA, *Historical Background of Dougherty County*, 39–41.

[54] "Organize," *Albany News*, 17 December 1867.

[55] Harold S. Wilson, *Confederate Industry, Manufacturers and Quartermasters in the Civil War* (Jackson MS: University of Mississippi Press, 2002) 276–78.

[56] Thronateeska DAR, *History and Reminiscences*, 61–62.

[57] The biographers of Horace King sharply contrast their subject, who served two terms in the Alabama reconstruction legislature, to Joiner. King, like Nelson Tift, was "a self-made man" and "never championed the little man but favored people like himself—either black or white." Lupold and French, *Bridging Deep South Rivers*, 220.

[58] Dougherty County Superior Court, June Term, 1864, Minute Book L, 139–41; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia*, 1870, 185; and Susan E. O'Donovan, "Philip Joiner, Southwest Georgia Black Republican," *The Journal of Southwest Georgia History* 4 (Fall 1986): 66–67.

[59] Lee W. Formwalt and Susan E. O'Donovan, "Tolls & Polls, Freedman Joiner Left a Legacy of Courage for Albany Citizens," *Albany Sunday Herald*, 26 October 1986; and *Albany News*, 23 August 1870.

[60] Clark to O. H. Howard, 31 October 1868, box 1, Sub Assistant Commissioner Letters Received (Albany, 1866–1868) Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, RG 105 and Hicks to Major J. R. Lewis, 9 October 1867, box 1, Letters Received, Third Military District, 1867–1868, Records of the United States Army Continental Commands, RG 393, National Archives, cited in William Warren Rogers, Jr., *A Scalawag in Georgia, Richard Whiteley and the Politics of Reconstruction* (Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press: 2007) 42.

[61] *Dawson Weekly Journal*, 9 April 1868, cited in Rogers, *Scalawag in Georgia*, 44.

[62] Ibid., 45.

[63] Diary of Nelson Tift, 18 January and 22 February 1869, GDAH, No. 2, AC 69-285, and Numan V. Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1983) 66.

[64] Diary of Tift, 24 December 1868.

[65] Meade to Grant, 8 and 23 November 1868, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 10/7. In relation to Tift's appeal, Meade later told Grant that his moderate views coincided with views set forth in an editorial on "The Condition of the South" in the *New York Tribune* on 23 January 1869. See Meade to Grant, 28 January 1869, in John Y. Simon, ed. *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, 30 vols. (Carbondale IL: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1995) 14: 116.

[66] Diary of Tift, 11 January 1869.

[67] Ibid., 6 January and 15 March 1869.

[68] See Russell Duncan, *Entrepreneur for Equality, Governor Rufus Bullock, Commerce, and Race in Post-Civil War Georgia* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1994) 84–85; *The Condition of Affairs in Georgia, Evidence before the Committee on Reconstruction relative to the condition of affairs in Georgia* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1869); and Diary of Tift, 30 March 1869.

[69] "Defence of the People of Georgia," *Albany News*, 14 June 1870; "Hon. Nelson Tift" ibid., 13 September; and "Hon. (?) Richard H. Whitely," ibid., 28 October 1870.

[70] See the *Cuthbert Appeal* and *Albany News*, 18 November 1870, cited in William Warren Rogers, Jr., "Not Reconstructed by a Long Ways Yet: Southwest Georgia's Disputed Congressional Election of 1870," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 82/2 (Summer 1998): 268, 271.

[71] Diary of Tift, 18–20 January 1871, and 6 March 1871; and "Hon. Nelson Tift," *Albany News*, 14 March 1871.

[72] Rogers, *Scalawag in Georgia*, 79.

[73] See Duncan, *Entrepreneur for Equality*, 134–44; "Hon. Nelson Tift," *Albany News*, 14 March 1871; and Diary of Tift, 27 February 1871.

[74] "Nelson Tift, Tenth District," *Brief Biographies of the Members of the Constitutional Convention* (Atlanta: Constitution Publishing Co., 1877) 109.

[75] *Albany News*, 6 September, ibid., 4 October, and "Whiteley's Doctrine Working to Its Logic," ibid., 6 August 1874.

[76] "Dougherty County. Historical Address delivered by Hon. Nelson Tift," *Journal of Southwest History* 4 (Fall 1986): 21, and "A Northern Visitor's Views of Albany and Southwest Georgia," *Albany Weekly News and Advertiser*, 5 January 1881.

[77] Mercer Diaries, 2 May 1862.

Chapter Four

[1] Henry Grady, *The New South, Writings and Speeches of Henry Grady* (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1971) 8.

[2] Amos to Phebe Tift, 15 January 1876, Porter Papers.

[3] "Dougherty County. Historical Address," 16, and "Improvements in the City," *Albany Patriot*, 22 September 1866.

[4] "Telegraph to Albany," *Albany Patriot*, 1 December 1866, and *Albany News*, 26 May 1871.

[5] De Credico, *Patriotism for Profit*, xvi.

[6] "Dougherty County. Historical Address," 16; "Improvements in Albany," *Albany Patriot*, 28 February 1866, "Improvements in the City," 22 September 1866; and Harper, "Development of Agriculture in Lower Georgia from 1850 to 1880," 111–120.

[7] Formwalt, "Planter Persistence in Southwest Georgia," 42, 57, and Henry W. Grady, "Cotton and Its Kingdom," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 63/377 (1881): 722. R. G. Dun & Co. reckoned Nelson to be "one, if not the wealthiest man in the City." Report on Nelson Tift, 28 August 1866, Dougherty County, Georgia, Dun Collection, 10/231.

[8] Census of the City of Key West with a valuation of the Real Estate, Stores, Manufactories &c, 31 December 1873, Monroe County Public Library. In 1874 R. G. Dun & Co. estimated Asa's Key West assets at $100,000, Report on Asa Tift, 12 August 1874, Monroe County, Florida, Dun Collection, 6/119.

[9] *Key of the Gulf*, cited in the *Mystic Press*, 12 March 1875.

[10] *Key West Despatch*, 4 January 1873, and *Key to the Gulf*, 16 and 18 May 1876.

[11] Browne, *Key West*, 54.

[12] Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1460.

[13] Angela to Stephen Mallory, 24 January and 14 February 1869, typescripts from the Pensacola Historical Society, cited in the Tift File, Monroe County Public Library, #77.

[14] Charles to Amos Tift, 29 January 1869, Porter Papers.

[15] Ernest Hemingway House typescript, Monroe County Public Library. Asa is best remembered today for his house, which became a national historic landmark. While he purchased the lot at 907 Whitehead Street in 1850, there is no record of a dwelling on the site till 1876. It was a sturdy structure, built with rock quarried from local pits on the island's highest point and meant to withstand hurricanes. It had four large rooms and an adjacent dining area and kitchen, with servant quarters and a coach house in the rear. When Asa died in 1889, the property was sold for $5,000 and changed hands three more times until purchased by Ernest Hemingway and his second wife Pauline in 1931. The Hemingways made many renovations, adding a swimming pool and a study in the servant quarters. Here Hemingway penned some of his famous novels and short stories, including *Death in the Afternoon*, *Green Hills*

of Africa, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Key West Architecture, Historical American Buildings Survey; typescript entitled "Asa Forsythe Tift" by Mildred Tift Rosam, Monroe County Public Library, Key West; and"Hemingway's House on Whitehead," *Southern Living* reprint from the *Key West Citizen*, 28 September 1999.

[16] Interview with Stephen Whalton, by Betty M. Bruce, 1961, Key West, in Ernest Hemingway House typescript.

[17] Orville to Amos Tift, 21 May 1871, Porter Papers. R. G. Dun & Co. noted in 1868 that "Mr. T. has evidently been running behind some time—his stock & base growing less & less for some years." Although Amos was a "very honest conscientious man," his business was worth no more than $6,000. The family's remaining assets, mainly real estate inherited from her father, were held by his wife. In desperation, Amos had formed a partnership with his son Henry. Report on Amos Tift, 25 August and 11 November 1968, New London County, Connecticut, Dun Collection, 45/186.

[18] Amos to Phebe Tift, 26 April 1872, and 20 and 23 November 1874, Porter Papers.

[19] Amos to Phebe Tift, 25 November and 1 December 1874, and Amos to Annie Tift, 28 December 1874, ibid.

[20] Amos to Phebe Tift, 14 and 28 December 1874, ibid.

[21] Amos to Phebe Tift, 26 January and 4 March 1875, and Amos to Elizabeth Tift, 2 February 1875, ibid.

[22] Amos to Phebe Tift, 28 and 31 January, 24 February, and 9 March 1875, ibid. Further assurance that she had made the right decision by staying in Mystic came from Phebe's sister, whose husband was president of Tennessee Wesleyan College. "I shall be delighted to see old Mystic once more and you all for it seemed to me an age since I left. I have found it as pleasant here as I could expect in a land like this, but I love my own native land the best." Jane Harding Dean to Phebe Tift, 20 April 1874, ibid.

[23] "Henry Harding Tift, Philanthropist, Founder and Builder of Tifton," newspaper clipping in the Robert Tift Papers, Douglas, Georgia, and Sarah Cochran Atwater, "Captain Henry Harding Tift—Biography," *Tifton Centennial Commemorative Booklet*, September 21-30 (Tifton GA: Long Printing & Office Supply Co. 1972) 2.

[24] *Mystic Pioneer*, 14 October 1865, and "Murder of a Mystic Man," *Mystic Press*, 14 February 1873.

[25] Orville to Amos Tift, 11 May and 11 July 1869, Porter Papers.

[26] Ibid, August 16, 1869. According to Van Dusen, the Connecticut whaling industry reached its "peak" in the 1840s. By the post-Civil War period "efficiency suffered" owing to "an increasing number of criminals, irresponsible drifters, and rough adventurers" who were joining the crews. Van Dusen, *Connecticut*, 317–18.

[27] Orville to Amos Tift, 14 May, 12 September, 1 June, and 11 July 1869, Porter Papers.

[28] Orville to Amos Tift, 12 September 1869, and 26 July and 8 August 1871, ibid., and "Groton," *Mystic Journal*, 28 January 1871.

[29] Orville to Amos Tift, 8 September 1870, Porter Papers, and "The Wedding at the Corner," *Mystic Journal*, 29 October 1870.

[30] Orville to Phebe Tift, 26 December 1870, Porter Papers.

[31] Orville to Amos Tift, 2 August 1875, ibid.

[32] Brownson Malsch, *Indianola, The Mother of Western Texas* (Austin TX: Shoal Creek Publishers, 1977) 251; Gary Cartwright, *Galveston, A History of the Island* (New York: Atheneum, 1991) 161; and Charles W. Hayes, *Galveston, History of the Island and the City*, 2 vols. (Austin TX: Jenkins Garrett Press, 1974) 2: 678, 731–35.

[33] "Murder of a Mystic Man," *Mystic Press*, 14 February 1873, and Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 227.

[34] Orville to Amos Tift, 2 August 1875, and 21 May 1876, and Eliza to Annie Tift, 8 February 1878, Porter Papers.

[35] Henry to Amos Tift, 19 and 28 February, 6 March, and 20 December 1870, and 24 April 1871, ibid.

[36] Henry Tift to "Sister," 24 February 1871, ibid.

[37] See Atwater, "Captain Henry Harding Tift," 2; "Amid Piney Woods and Wiregrass," *Daily Tifton Gazette* (Centennial Edition), 26 September 1972; and Williams, *History of Tift County*, 26. Other earlier names for Tifton included Slab Town, from the shacks workers built from slabs of leftover wood from the mill, and Lena, Henry's former sweetheart in Mystic.

[38] Malone, "Piney Woods Farmers of South Georgia," 52, 67, and Harper, "Development of Agriculture in Lower Georgia from 1850 to 1880," 103–105, 111.

[39] Wetherington, *The New South*, 29, and Mark V. Wetherington, *Plain Folk's Fight, The Civil War and Reconstruction in Piney Woods Georgia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005) 34, 46. Wetherington's quoted material is drawn from Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838–1839* (Savannah: Library of Georgia, 1992) 146.

[40] Typescript by T. W. Tift, Porter Papers.

[41] Henry to Amos Tift, 5 August 1872, 9 November 1873, and 5 April 1874, ibid.

[42] Edmund to Amos Tift, 7 April and 7 October 1873, Edmund to Phebe Tift, 17 October 1873, Edmund to Amos Tift, 22 October and 3 November 1873, and Edmund Tift to "Sister," 9 November 1873, ibid.

[43] According to local lore, the early merchants came from the nearby station of Riverside, just a few miles west of the sawmill, and the name, a conflation of Tift's Town, came about when a worker named George Badger, climbed a pine tree and

nailed a placard on it with Tifton in bold letters. Williams, *History of Tift County*, 26.

[44] Edmund to "Sister," 10 December 1873, and Edmund to Phebe Tift, 20 January 1875, Porter Papers.

[45] Edmund to Henry Tift, 26 December 1873, and Edmund to Phebe Tift, 17 March 1874, ibid.

[46] Edmund to Amos Tift, 3 March 1874, and Edmund to Orville Tift, 22 March 1874, ibid.

[47] Henry to Amos Tift, 5 April 1874, and Edmund to Phebe Tift, 24 February 1875, ibid., and "Amid Piney Woods and Wiregrass," *Daily Tifton Gazette*, 26 September 1972.

[48] Wetherington, *The New South*, 109, 115. By 1876 R. G. Dun & Co. rated Henry's sawmill as "quite safe" and doing a "flourishing business." Reports on H. H. Tift, 9 September 1876, Berrien County, Georgia, Dun Collection, 2/109 and 36/241.

[49] Henry to Amos Tift, 9 November 1873, Porter Papers, and Katherine Tift Jones, "Thin Dusk," unpublished typescript in the Orville Tift Papers, Agrirama, Tifton.

[50] Henry to Phebe Tift, 20 February 1875, Porter Papers.

[51] Amos to Eliza and Caroline Tift, 25 November 1875; Amos to Phebe Tift, 29 November 1875, and Amos to Anna Tift, 30 November 1875, ibid.

[52] Amos to Annie Tift, 30 November 1875; Amos to Phebe Tift, 6 January 1876; Amos to Hannah Tift, 13 December 1875; Amos to Phebe Tift, 20 December 1875; and 3 January 1876, ibid. Amos's description of the New Year's celebration of blacks in Albany compares with that of W. E. B. Dubois a generation later of their Saturday night frolics on Broad Street. "They drink considerable quantities of whiskey, but do not get very drunk; they talk and laugh loudly at times, but seldom quarrel or fight. They walk up and down the streets, meet and gossip with friends, stare at the shop windows, buy coffee, cheap candy, and clothes, and at dusk drive home—happy? Well no, not exactly happy, but much happier than as though they had not come." W. E. B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk in Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1999) 287–88.

[53] Amos to Hannah Tift, 13 December 1875, and Amos to Phebe Tift, 27 December 1875, and 9 January 1876, Porter Papers.

[54] Amos to Anna Tift, 4 December 1881, and 22 February and 30 March 1882, ibid.

[55] Caroline Tift Holmes to Edmund and Kitty Tift, 6 March 1883, Betty Skinner Papers, Ponte Vedra, Florida.

[56] "Obituary," *Mystic Press*, 1 March 1883, and "Obituary," *Zion's Herald* (Boston), 2 May 1883. A 1901 financial statement of $7,503 in Phebe's will provides an indication of Amos's worth. Will of Phebe Tift, Porter Papers.

[57] Nelson to Hannah Tift, 24 April 1869, Tift Papers, University of Georgia Library, MS 608, and Wetherington, *The New South*, 157–58.

[58] "N. & A. F. Tift Warehouse and Commission Merchants," *Albany News*, 21 March 1871; "H. H. & N. F. Tift Machine Shop," ibid., 26 July 1870; and Wetherington, *The New South*, 215.

[59] "Address of Col. Nelson Tift," *Albany Weekly News and Advertiser*, 28 May 1874, and Diary of Tift, 31 July 1874.

[60] Albany typescript in Pritchett Papers and "Time Tables," *Albany News*, 11 December 1873.

[61] Wetherington, *The New South*, 172, and "Guano," *Albany News*, 26 March 1881; "Planters Headquarters," ibid.; 1 October 1881; "Look Out!" ibid.; 5 November 1881; N. & A. F. Tift & Co.," ibid., 17 March 1883; "Messrs. N. & A. F. Tift & Co.," ibid., 16 October 1886, and "No New Accounts Opened," ibid., 28 January 1882.

[62] H. T. M., "My Personal Column," *Albany Herald*, 18 January 1949, and "Practical Suggestions," *Albany News*, 6 October 1883, "Free Trade—A Tariff for Revenue—A Tariff for Protection," ibid., 11 February 1882.

[63] *A Handbook of Albany and Dougherty County, Georgia* (Albany GA: privately printed, Ga., 1887), 51, 53, 79–80.

[64] *Albany News and Advertiser*, 7 March, 1885, "Albany," ibid., 25 July, 1885, and ibid., 21 November 1885.

[65] "Our Sorrow" and "A Vacant Chair," ibid., 21 November 1891. Another estimate placed Nelson's total worth at three to five million dollars. His assets included Albany's street railway system, three cotton warehouses, large tracts of real estate, over 100,000 acres of land, and many thousands of dollars of railroad, city, corporate, and state bonds. "Col. Nelson Tift," *Albany Weekly New and Advertiser*, 28 November 1891.

[66] Susan O'Donovan, "Nelson Tift (1810–1891)," www.georgiaencyclopedia.org

Chapter Five

[1] Sonny Sammons, *The Keepers of Echowah* (Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Co., 1995) 3.

[2] Carolyn Beebe to Thomas and Catherine Tift, 28 May 1949, Porter Papers. Despite diligent research carried out by Mildred Tift Rosam of Hollywood, Florida, on Asa Tift and Tift connections to Key West, she was never able to find any firm line of descent. Yet she claims to be "related to the late Asa F. Tift and his family." See "Rosam Genealogy" and "Asa Forsyth Tift" in the Tift File, # 77, Monroe County Public Library. Neither her father—Chester Hill Tift, grandfather—Albert Cannon Tift, or great-grandfather—Lewis Samuel Tift show up in Timothy Tefft's compilation or any other genealogy. The 1900 census, however, shows a Joseph and a John Tift, both of whom were born in the Bahamas and had numerous progeny. Joseph had a son named Lewis H. Tift (b. 1884). See AncestryLibrary.com-1900

United States Federal Census, National Archives. Laurie Tift, the widow of Robert, the last of the Key West Tifts, who died in 2004, confirms that her husband's family originally came from the Bahamas. Interview with Laurie Tift, 16 December 2004, Key West, Florida.

[3] "A Touching Memorial," *Daily News and Advertiser*, 27 February 1889.

[4] Deed Book SS, 391 in Key West Architecture, Historic American Buildings Survey, FLA 176, Book #1; and Commissioners Deed Book U, 375, ibid., FLA 179, Book #4. Also see 1885 Tax Rolls, cited in the ASA-KW file.

[5] Partial List of Heirs to Asa Tift's Estate, ibid. By the time of his death Asa had also acquired a considerable amount of property in Albany. See Nelson Tift Letterbook, 8–10, 203/9, GRG 3-474, GDAH.

[6] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 26–27, 30, 34.

[7] Robert B. Outland III, "Old Ways in the New Old South: Persistent Labor Patterns in Georgia's Postbellum Naval Stores Industry," *Atlanta History, A Journal of Georgia and the South* 45/3 (Spring 2002): 9–10, 15, 20.

[8] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 26–27, 30–31; Pauline Tyson Stephens, "Tift County Plans for 50th 'Birthday Party,'" *Albany Herald*, 18 May 1955; and "Tifton—From Indian Trails to I-75," *Tifton Magazine* (November–December 1990): 5.

[9] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 147–48, 474–75.

[10] Ibid., 32, 209, and "Tifton—From Indian Trails to I-75," 6.

[11] Jones, "Thin Dusk," Orville Tift Papers, Agrirama.

[12] "Tifton—From Indian Trails to I-75," 20–21; and Williams, *History of Tift County*, 37, 443.

[13] *Berrien County Pioneer*, 1889, cited in *The Sunny South and the Georgia Recorder* 15 (Winter 1990): 4.

[14] DeVine, "Town Development in Wiregrass Georgia," 14.

[15] "Tifton—From Indian Trails to I-75," 7–8, and Williams, *History of Tift County*, 34–36, 162.

[16] Atwater, *Tifton Centennial Booklet*, 37.

[17] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 36, and "Our Little City," *Tifton Gazette*, 8 April 1895.

[18] "Growth Phenomenal in the 1890s," *Daily Tifton Gazette*, 26 September 1972; "Tifton—From Indian Trails to I-75," 6–8; and Williams, *History of Tift County*, 36.

[19] "Growth Phenomenal in the 1890s," *Daily Tifton Gazette*, 26 September 1972, and Williams, *History of Tift County*, 402.

[20] Holograph manuscript by T. W. Tift, Porter Papers.

[21] Vance, *Human Geography of the South*, 214, and Roland M. Harper, "Development of Agriculture in Lower Georgia from 1890–1920," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 6/4 (December 1922): 326–32.

[22] John D. Hicks, *The American Nation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1958) 231.

[23] *Tifton Gazette*, 28 April 1893, 21 July 1893.

[24] For information on the Southern immigration movement, see B. V. Loewenberg, "Efforts of the South to Encourage Immigration, 1865–1900," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 33/3 (1934): 362–85; Joseph J. Spengler, "Population Theory in the South," *Journal of Southern History* 2/3 (August 1936): 360–89; and Katharine M. Pruett and John D. Fair, "Promoting a New South: Immigration, Racism, and 'Alabama on Wheels,'" *Agricultural History*, 66/1 (Winter 1992): 19–41.

[25] "Tifton," *Tifton Gazette*, 15 December 1893.

[26] Ibid., 11 March 1892.

[27] "Pennsylvanians at Tifton," ibid., 14 December 1894; and ibid., 11 January 1895; and "Locating Near Tifton," ibid., 18 January 1895.

[28] Ibid., 1 March and "Tifton's Steady Growth," ibid., 15 February 1895.

[29] "An Eden-Land," ibid., 12 July, and ibid., 3 May 1895.

[30] "Westerners Come South," ibid., 22 January 1897.

[31] "Growth Phenomenal in the 1890s," *Daily Tifton Gazette*, 26 September 1972.

[32] *Tifton Gazette*, 20 July 1894, Williams, *History of Tift County*, 39.

[33] "Profits of Peach Raising," *Tifton Gazette*, 28 August 1896.

[34] *Handbook of Albany and Dougherty County*, 37–42.

[35] Newspaper clipping [1926], Sherman Papers, Arlington, Virginia, and Knight, *Georgia and Georgians*, 6: 3211.

[36] Aimee also remembers that her mother Irene "thought the Halls and the Ashes were much more distinguished and superior in blood than the Tifts." Interview with Aimee Hodges, 18 February 2004, Milledgeville, Georgia.

[37] Thronateeska Chapter, *History and Reminiscences*, 118–19, and Newspaper clipping [1926], Sherman Papers.

[38] Norfleet to Tift, 27 July 1907, and W. D. M. to Tift, 22 August 1907, James Mercer Tift Papers, Thronateeska Foundation, Albany, 1B 81.19.968a and 1B 81.19.970a.

[39] Thronateeska Chapter, *History and Reminiscences*, 355–56.

[40] Harrington to H. H. Tift, 10 May 1907, and Harrington to J. M. Tift, 5 July 1907, James Mercer Tift Papers, 1F 81.19.291a-b and 1D81.19.581a-c. See also "The Sand Bank May Become the Local Savings Bank" in *Sand-Lime Bricks and Blocks, The Twentieth Century Building Material*, ibid., 1C XX34.03a-b.

[41] L. F. Kwurtkowski to H. H. Tift, 2 January 1908, ibid., 1C 81.19.545a-c, and newspaper clipping, 10 April 1909, Dougherty County Public Library, Vertical Files, Business.

[42] "Albany Gets Another Big Manufacturing Plant," *Albany Herald*, 2 March 1910.

[43] Newspaper clipping and typescript entitled "Wooten Family History" by David Sherman in the Sherman Papers.

[44] Maurice Wheeler Tift to Lula Tift, 2 January 1890, 25 November 1900, Sherman Papers.

[45] Sherman, "Wooten Family History" typescript and Thronateeska Chapter, *History and Reminiscences*, 122.

[46] Knight, *Georgia and Georgians*, 6: 3210.

[47] Walter G. Cooper, *The Story of Georgia*, 4 vols. (New York: The American Historical Society, 1938) 4:469; Allen D. Candler and Clement A. Evans, eds., *Cyclopedia of Georgia*, 3 vols. (Atlanta: State Historical Association, 1906) 3:154; and Thronateeska Chapter, *History and Reminiscences*, 117–18.

[48] Dubois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 285, 310.

[49] Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, Abstract with Supplement for Georgia* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913) 1: 578 and 589. Insurance Maps of Albany, Georgia, April 1890 and December 1911, Sanborn Perris Map Co., New York; "Tifton—From Indian Trails to I-75," 8, and Harper, "Development of Agriculture in Lower Georgia from 1890 to 1920," 332.

[50] Ann Malone estimates that as "subsistence farming steadily declined after the mid 1880s" in South Georgia, "diversification gradually gave way to increased cotton concentration. In the 1890s, cotton acreage in the region doubled." Malone, "Piney Woods Farmers," 77.

[51] "Tifton's Gigantic Enterprise," *Tifton Gazette*, 4 January 1901.

[52] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 53–55, and "A Shingle Plant," *Tifton Gazette*, 17 November 1905.

[53] "Tifton District Gains," ibid., 15 July 1904, and "For a National Bank," ibid., 22 June 1906.

[54] "Foul Work of Fire Fiend," ibid., 22 April 1898.

[55] "Hotel Sadie in Ashes," ibid., 3 March 1905, and Williams, *History of Tift County*, 56.

[56] "Fire Fiend's Foul Works," *Tifton Gazette*, 11 November 1904.

[57] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 61–65, and "Confirmed Name of Tift," *Tifton Gazette*, 24 March 1905, "No Opposition to Tift," ibid., 30 June 1905, and "Tift Created by Unanimous Vote," 18 August 1905.

[58] June Jackson Parrish, *The History of Cook County, Georgia and Its Municipalities* (Adel GA: privately published, 1967) 8.

[59] See chapter by George Harris King in Williams, *History of Tift County*, 292.

[60] Address by T. W. Tift at the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Abraham Baldwin College, April 1958, Porter Papers.

[61] Address by T. W. Tift on the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Tifton, Porter Papers, and *Tifton Gazette*, 22 October 1909.

[62] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 84.

[63] Ibid., 231–32, and "Citizens Meeting Raised C.C. Funds," *Tifton Gazette*, 24 January 1913.

[64] Addie Davis Cobb, *History of Dodge County* (Atlanta, Foot & Davies, 1932) 94; Richard Lowitt, *A Merchant Prince of the Ninteteenth Century, William E. Dodge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954) 266; and Wetherington, *The New South*, 244–45.

[65] Address by T. W. Tift; *Tifton Gazette*, 19 October and 23 November 1906, and 3 January 1908; and Williams, *History of Tift County*, 66–67, 176–77, 339.

[66] Holograph manuscript by T. W. Tift, Porter Papers, and Williams, *History of Tift County*, 299, 339.

[67] *Tifton Gazette*, 31 May 1901.

[68] Eugenia Wootton Stone, *Yesterday at Tift* (Doraville: Foote & Davies, 1969) 82, and Board of Trustees Minutes, 31 May 1906, Tift College Records of Forsyth, GDAH, 4/19.

[69] Bessie Tift to C. H. S. Jackson, 10 April 1908, and 9 May 1905, Bessie Willingham Tift Papers, Mercer University Library.

[70] Stone, *Yesterday at Tift*, 83, and C. L. McGinty, "A Short History of Tift College," *Monroe Advertiser*, 26 May 1949.

[71] Stone, *Yesterday at Tift*, 82–84.

[72] Interview with Catherine (Tee) Porter, 31 January 2004, Atlanta, Georgia.

[73] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 475–78; "Literary and Social Club," *Tifton Gazette*, 19 February 1905 and "Library Club Entertains," ibid., 3 March 1905; "Funeral of Tift to be Held Today," *Atlanta Constitution*, 5 February 1922, and clipping from the Belle Willingham Lawrence Scrapbook, Agrirama, Tifton.

[74] "A Monument to Mr. Tift," *Tifton Gazette*, 17 February 1922.

[75] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 476–77, and Deed of Sale, 6 June 1906, Chicago, Illinois, Porter Papers.

[76] "A Great Schooner Was Built with Tift County Timbers," *News-Examiner* (Tifton), 16 January 1975.

[77] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 468–69, 476, and Deed of Sale, 10 August 1910, Stonington, Connecticut, Porter Papers.

[78] "Brilliant Event in Chattanooga," *Daily Tifton Gazette*, 14 November 1914, and Individual Income Tax Return for Henry H. Tift, Jr., 1926, Henry Tift Papers, T111, Agrirama.

[79] Interviews with Virginia Brumby, 15 August 2003, Atlanta, Georgia, Amos Chapman Tift III, 21 June 2006, Tifton, and Jerome Pound Tift, 27 April 2004, Macon.

[80] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 484, and interview with Lutrelle McLennan Rankin, 7 October 2003, Tifton.

[81] "The Tifts—A Remarkable Family," *News-Examiner*, 9 January 1975.

[82] Thomas W. Tift to Bessie Tift, 21 and 23 July 1914, Porter Papers.

[83] "The Tifts," *News-Examiner*, 9 January 1975.

[84] Despite her Northern upbringing, Catherine's family was well connected and steeped in Georgia history. Her great grandfather was Hiram Warner, a native of Massachusetts who became one of the first justices of the Georgia Supreme Court when it was founded in 1845. A no-nonsense Yankee approach is evident in an 1851 description of him in *DeBow's Review* as "the controlling spirit upon the Supreme Bench, so acknowledged by all classes, and especially the profession." Eventually Warner served as chief justice from 1867 to 1880, defeated Benjamin Harvey Hill for a term in the United States Congress, 1856–1858, and twice ran for governor in 1857 and 1880. And Joseph Meriwether Terrell of Greenville, Governor of Georgia from 1902 to 1907, was the brother of Catherine's grandfather, Dr. Edward Black Terrell. William H. Davidson, *Brooks of Honey and Butter, Plantations and People of Meriwether County, Georgia* (Alexander City AL: Outlook Publishing Co., 1971) 269–88. *Debow's Review of the Southern and Western States* New Series (January 1851) 4: 72. "Hiram Warner" in William J. Northen, ed., *Men of Mark in Georgia*, 7 vols. (Atlanta: A. B. Caldwell, 1911) 3: 483–92; Terrell genealogical records compiled by Catherine Hill Terrell Tift in the Porter Papers; Interview with Catherine Tift Porter, 23 February 2004; and "Joseph Meriwether Terrell," in Kenneth Coleman and Charles Stephen Gurr, eds., *Dictionary of Georgia Biography*, 2 vols. (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1983) 2:966.

[85] "How I Met My Husband," *Atlanta Constitution*, 20 July 1943, and interview with Catherine Porter, 23 February 2004.

[86] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 84.

[87] "Captain Tift of Tifton—A Captain of Industry," *Atlanta Constitution*, 12 June 1910, and Northen, *Men of Mark* 5: 366–67.

[88] Administrative settlement of the estate of H. H. Tift, 23 May 1922, Tift County Court House, Tifton.

[89] After Bessie's death in 1936 the Tifton Realty assets were jointly held by Amos, Tommy, and the children of Henry, Jr. In 1945 its real estate holdings of $180,331 and in 1948 remaining assets of $12,600 were divided equally among them. Its board also authorized sale of the Tift house in Mystic to T. W. Tift for $7,500 in 1948. Shed of much of its capital assets, Tifton Realty, later overseen by Tommy and his family as Tift & Co., continued to operate independently in Tifton. Minutes of the Stockholders of the Tifton Realty Company, 24 March 1945, and 10 April 1948, H. H. Tift Papers, T64.

[90] "Tifton Today Mourns Death of Founder and Father," *Daily Tifton Gazette*, 4 February 1922.

[91] Ibid. and "Impressive Scenes at Final Services," 17 February 1922. Funeral expenses, including transportation to Mystic, totaled $7,050.81. Transfer ledger, H. H. Tift Papers.

[92] Interview with Thomas Willingham Tift, Jr., 23 February 2004, Atlanta, Georgia, and Williams, *History of Tift County*, 470.

Chapter Six

[1] Newspaper clipping from the *Albany Herald* [1953], David Sherman Papers.

[2] Financial Statement, Mrs. Bessie W. Tift, 1935, H. H. Tift Papers, Agrirama, T111, and interview with Catherine Tift Porter, 31 January 2004, Atlanta.

[3] Interview with Virginia Brumby, 15 August 2003, Atlanta.

[4] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 481–82, and *Tifton Gazette*, 21 May 1909, and "H. H. Tift, Jr. Dies Result of Auto Accident," 14 June 1929.

[5] James C. Bryant, *Capital City Club, The First One Hundred Years, 1883–1983* (Atlanta: The Club, 1991) 182, and Interview with Porter, 21 November 2003 and 31 January 2004.

[6] Catherine Terrell Tift to Thomas W. Tift, 15, 21, and 30 August and 4 September 1927, Porter Papers.

[7] Ibid., 15 and 24 August 1927.

[8] Thomas W. Tift to Catherine Terrell Tift, 5 August 1928, and Catherine Terrell Tift to Thomas W. Tift, 17 August 1928, ibid.

[9] Thomas W. Tift to Catherine Terrell Tift, 5 August 1928, and Bessie Tift to Thomas W. Tift, 12 December 1928, and 19 March 1929, ibid.

[10] "She Left Laughter in Her Wake," *Tifton Gazette*, 13 June 1990.

[11] Scrapbook of Katherine Tift-Jones, Porter Papers.

[12] "Way Down South in Georgia," *Oneonta Star*, 6 December 1924, and Scrapbook of Tift-Jones, Porter Papers.

[13] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 236, and Nathan Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) 248–49.

[14] Eric Lott, *Love and Theft, Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 3–6, and Marlon Riggs, *Ethnic Notions* (California Newsreel, 1987 and 2004). See also Robert Toll, *Blacking Up, The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), and George Rehin, "The Darker Image: American Negro Minstrelsy Through the Historian's Lens," *Journal of American Studies* 9/3 (December 1975): 365–73 for further insights on mimicry.

[15] Scrapbook of Tift-Jones, Porter Papers; "She Left Laughter," and Interview with Porter, 30 January 2004.

[16] "Unusual Music at Capital City Club," *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 November 1920, and Interview with Porter, 20 May 2006.

[17] Maurice Wheeler Tift to Jerry Holmes, 8 March 1960, Sherman Papers.

[18] Interview with Robert Hall Tift, 29 February 2004, Douglas, Georgia.

[19] Typescript by David Sherman, "Wooten Family History," Sherman Papers.

[20] Sharon Thomason, *Raising Cane, A History of Bob's Candies, Inc.* (Roswell GA: WH Wolfe Associates, 1990) 28, and interview with Bee McCormack, 17 April 2006, Albany.

[21] Scrapbook, Robert Tift Papers.

[22] "Wooten Family History," Sherman Papers, and Interview with John Sherman, 11 August 2004, Albany, Georgia.

[23] David Sherman to the author, 8 August 2005, letter in author's possession.

[24] Interview with John Sherman.

[25] Newspaper clipping, Sherman Papers.

[26] Asa Forsythe Tift to Maurice Wheeler Tift, n.d., ibid.

[27] "Wooten Family History," ibid.

[28] "Asa and Will Tift Lost in Great Flood," *Albany Herald*, 19 January 1925.

[29] Interviews with Paul Keenan, 18 August 2006, and John Sherman.

[30] David Sherman to the author, 8 August 2005.

[31] "M. W. Tift and Wife Injured in Auto Accident," *Albany Herald*, 20 December 1933; Newspaper clipping, Sherman Papers; and Scrapbook, Robert Tift Papers.

[32] Last Will and Testament of Maurice W. Tift, Dougherty County Courthouse.

[33] Maria Martin to Carolyn Beebe, 4 September 1950, Porter Papers; newspaper clipping and Maurice W. Tift to Jerry Holmes, 8 March 1960, Sherman Papers.

[34] Interviews with Tommy Tift, Jr., June Giddens Boyette, 27 July 2007, Tifton; and Amos and Serita Tift, 21 June 2006, Tifton.

[35] Interviews with Mike Brumby, 6 October 2003, Tifton; and Catherine Tift Porter, 31 January 2004, Atlanta.

[36] Tommy's other business interests prior to World War II included Tifton Silica Brick & Stone Co., Tifton Rug Mills, and Tiftonia, 1,400 acres of single-family homes and an industrial park near Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. Interview with Catherine Tift Porter, 26 March 2004, and Biography and Recollections of Catherine Tift Porter and Jimmy Porter, Perpetual Memorials Website for Thomas Willingham Tift, Sr. (1889–1988) http://www.memorials.com/twtiftsr.

[37] Transcript of the Ceremonies Which Awarded the Army-Navy "E" to the Piedmont Cotton Mills, Egan, Georgia-27 July 1943, Porter Papers, and Interview with Tommy Tift, Jr., 23 February 2004.

[38] Interviews with Porter, 30–31 January 2004, and Tommy Tift, Jr., and www.quoteworld.org/category/art/author/aristide_briand.

[39] In her memoir, Katherine Tift Jones refers to Tommy as "a tower of strength" whose "kindness" she would never forget. Amos Chapman Tift III confirms that his grandfather had little aptitude for money. Jones, "Thin Dusk," Orville Tift Papers; interview with Amos Tift, 21 June 2006, and "Tifts Donate Grand Piano to ABAC Music Program," *Tifton Daily Gazette*, 25 July 1974.

[40] Interview with Boyette.

[41] Interviews with Catherine Tift Porter, 30–31 January 2004, and Tommy Tift, Jr.

[42] T. W. Tift, Jr. to the author, 11 March 2004.

[43] Interview with Tommy Tift, Jr.

[44] "Air Service or Lip Service," *Paris Properties Real Estate Report*, 1976, and Interview with Tommy Tift, Jr.

[45] "Tommy Tift: Airport area promoter betting the Southside will rise again," *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, 24 January 1983, and Interview with Tommy Tift, Jr.

[46] Interviews with Catherine Tift Porter, 26 March 2004, and Tommy Tift, Jr.

[47] Jerome B. Pound, *Memoirs of Jerome B. Pound with Histories of Pound-Murphey-Willingham-Palmer-Pitts Families Bound to Me by Ties of Blood* (Chattanooga TN: privately published, 1949) 4, 28, 240; "J. B. Pound Dies at 87," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, 18 February 1952; and "J. B. Pound's Memoirs," *Savannah Morning News*, 24 December 1949.

[48] Sarah Blackwell Gober Temple, *The First Hundred Years, A Short History of Cobb County, in Georgia* (Atlanta: Walter W. Brown Publishing Co., 1935) 406–407; Helen Spain Brumby, *Chronology of the Brumby Chair Company* (Lexington VA: privately printed, 1992); and Account Files, Brumby Chair Company Papers, MS. 1, 1937–1944, University of Georgia Library.

[49] "Thomas M. Brumby, Jr.," *Atlanta Journal*, 21 August 1938; and Interview with Virginia Brumby.

[50] Northen, *Men of Mark*, 7: 1–4, and Tammy Harden Galloway, *The Inman Family, An Atlanta Family from Reconstruction to World War I* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2002) 92–93.

[51] Knight, *Georgia and Georgians*, 7: 1925–1926, and Pound, *Memoirs of Jerome B. Pound*, 247–48.

[52] Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs, A Chronicle of Its People and Events*, 2 vols. (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1954) 2:57–58.

[53] Interviews with Virginia Brumby and Lutrelle Rankin, 7 October 2003, Tifton.

[54] Ibid. and Kayla Tillman, "O Christmas Tree...O Family Tree," *Tifton Magazine* (Winter 1993–1994): 13.

[55] Warren Grice and E. Merton Coulter, *Georgia Through Two Centuries*, 3 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1965) 2:534, *Tifton Gazette*, 24 April 1993, and Interview with Lutrelle Tift Rankin. Not supporting a continuation of "massive resistance" to desegregation, Homer signed the Sibley Commission majority report, which sought "to preserve both public education and the maximum amount of legal segregation." Jeff Roche, *The Sibley Commission and the Politics of Desegregation in Georgia* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998) 166.

[56] Interview with Catherine Tift Porter, 15 January 2006.

[57] Interview with Carol Tift, 9 May 2004, and Bessie Tift to "Kathleen," 6 July 1934, Jerome Pound Tift Papers, Macon, Georgia.

[58] Interviews with Jerome Pound Tift, 27 April 2004, and William Lee Tift, 24 January 2006, Macon. Christine Cole Lee's line of descent goes back nine generations to Colonel Richard Lee, who was also the great-great-grandfather of the Confederate general. Warren Wright Lee, "The Sidney Warren Lees of Wilkinson

County, Georgia" (1998), 10–13, 26–29, 32–34, 39–49, and "Lee Family" Genealogy, Jerome Pound Tift Papers.

[59] "Country Boy Goes to Town," unpublished autobiography by Dr. W. G. Lee (privately printed, 1954), and Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South, Revolutions in the Southern Economy* (New York: Basic Books, 1986) 120.

[60] Myrick Hilsman, "Biographical Sketch of William Greene Lee," in Victor Davidson, *History of Wilkinson County* (Macon GA: J. W. Burke, 1978) 581–83, and Grice and Coulter, *Georgia Through Two Centuries*, 2: 410–11.

[61] "Tranquilhil," unpublished essay by Kippy Tift, 2001, in author's possession, and interview with Ann Tift, 21 September 2004, Macon.

[62] Interview with Jerome Pound Tift, and "Georgia Doctors Elect Tift As Delegate to AMA," *Macon Telegraph*, 7 May 1958, "Heart Fund Opens Drive For $25,764," ibid., 2 February 1961, and "Dr. Tift To Head Hospital," ibid., 25 April 1969.

[63] Typescript entitled "Recovering May: An Oral History" by Jeannie Tift, June 1990, Jerome Pound Tift Papers, and Interview with Jerome Pound Tift.

[64] David Sherman to the author, 8 August 2005, and typescript entitled "Mercer-Perryman-Jones-Sherman Family," David Sherman Papers.

[65] David Sherman to the author, 8 August 2005.

[66] "Mercer-Perryman-Jones-Sherman Family" typescript, David Sherman Papers.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Interview with Sue McGough, 13 December 2005, Mobile, Alabama.

[69] Newspaper clippings in Robert Tift scrapbook, Robert Tift Papers, and Interview with Robert Tift, 29 February 2004, Douglas, Georgia.

[70] Overlooking the brokerage genius of Richard Tift, William Brueckheimer notes that the development of quail plantations in the Albany area "resulted not from events in Albany, but because most of the available land in the immediate Thomasville-Tallahassee core region was already in the hands of northern owners by the 1920s." William R. Brueckheimer, "The Quail Plantations of the Thomasville-Tallahassee-Albany Regions," *The Journal of Southwest Georgia History* 3 (Fall 1985): 57.

[71] Robert C. Balfour, Jr., *This Land I Have Loved, 1887–1979* (Tallahassee FL: Rose Publishing, 1975) 124, and *Albany Herald*, 13 December 1959.

[72] Tift to Woodruff, 1 October 1936, Woodruff Papers, Emory University, 10/274.

[73] Interviews with Lamar Clifton and Harold Hudgens, 26 July 2005, Albany.

[74] *Boss Emeritus* (Atlanta: privately printed, 1985) 15.

[75] Newspaper clippings in Robert Tift scrapbook and Dean Wohlgemuth, "Meet Your Commissioner," *Georgia Fish & Game* 2/4 (April 1967): 10.

[76] Interview with Hudgens. This statewide recognition brought numerous public appointments in its wake. Tift became a trustee of the University of Georgia Foundation and the Rachelwood Wildlife Research Preserve in Pennsylvania,

chairman of the Chehaw Park Authority and the Albany-Dougherty County Hospital Authority, and a member of the board of directors for the Citizens and Southern Bank of Albany, the Central of Georgia Railroad, and the Georgia-Florida Southern Railway Company.

[77] Lee Formwalt, "A Garden of Irony and Diversity," in *The New Georgia Guide* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996) 525–26.

[78] Mellon to Woodruff, 26 February 1959, and Woodruff to Mellon, 8 June 1959, Woodruff Papers, 10/194.

[79] Jennifer Hafer, "Ichauway: A Research Mecca," *Albany Herald*, 19 May 1996.

[80] "Community Center Founders Honored," ibid., 10 January 1977.

[81] Woodruff to Olin, 7 March 1959; Mellon to Woodruff, 12 March 1959; and Olin to Woodruff, 16 March 1959, Woodruff Papers, 10/216, 10/194, and 10/216.

[82] Gene Wood, "Field Trials Past," *Albany Sunday Herald*, 23 January 1977.

[83] The tornado that ripped through downtown Albany on 10 February 1940 caused 18 deaths and millions of dollars in property damage. Joseph Kitchens, C. Stephen Gurr, and Jennifer Hafer, *Generations, The Story of Albany* (Montgomery AL: Community Communications, 1998) 46–47.

[84] Tift to Woodruff, 19 February 1940, Tift and Hollis Lanier to Woodruff, 4 March 1943, Woodruff to Tift, 13 March 1943, Tift to Woodruff, 22 May 1956, and Woodruff to Tift, 28 May 1956, Woodruff Papers, 10/274.

[85] Tift to Woodruff, 16 September 1954, ibid.

[86] Eisenhower to Woodruff, 11 January 1950, and Woodruff to Eisenhower, 16 January 1950, ibid., 10/78; "'Ike' Among Guests Feted By Woodruffs," *Atlanta Constitution*, 3 February 1950; and Balfour, *Land I Have Loved*, 126.

[87] Interview with Malone, and "Ike's Shangri-La in Georgia Pines," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 14 February 1954, and interview with Thomas Malone, 13 July 2006, Atlanta.

[88] Interview with Hudgens and newspaper clipping in scrapbook of Robert Tift, Robert Tift Papers. As a male bonding ritual, quail hunting ranks high. Sue McGough's husband Dawson, whose family owned a plantation in East Alabama, received a letter in 1950 from Vice Admiral Robert Carney, Commander of the Second Fleet, addressed to "The Quail Bowl, Pittsview, Alabama," regretting he could not accept his invitation to hunt. He was headed overseas in mid-October to take over a new command, and it would take "a miracle" to make it to Alabama for quail season. "The hell of it is, that shooting season will be almost over when I get to England and will not have begun before I leave the United States." Carney to McGough, 20 September 1950, McGough Papers.

[89] Joe Jones to Tift, 4 November 1958, Woodruff Papers, 10/274.

[90] Newspaper clipping in scrapbook of Robert Tift, Robert Tift Papers, and Interview with Hudgens.

[91] Interviews with Hudgens, Malone, and Keenan.

[92] Additionally the great-grandfather of Woodruff on his mother's side, Joseph Winship, was also a Yankee transplant from Massachusetts. Dell Wager Wells, *George Waldo Woodruff, A Life of Quiet Achievement* (Macon: Mercer University, 1987) 2–11.

[93] "Richard Tift, 87, Dies," *Albany Herald*, 16 October 1988, and interviews with Malone, Hudgens, and Robert Tift.

[94] Interview with Aimee Hodges, 18 February 2004.

[95] Interview with Julia Oliver, 9 March 2004.

[96] The *Dadeville Record*, 7 February 1974, *Birmingham News*, 31 January 1974, and *Alexander City Outlook*, 3 February 1974, cited in the "New Commissioner," *Alabama Social Welfare* 39/2 (March–April 1974): 1–2, and interview with Oliver.

[97] "Mrs. Oliver, State Employee, is Cited," *Birmingham News*, 30 June 1974, and "Mrs. Oliver state social work president," ibid., 4 April 1975, and Burr Ingram, "The Lady Commissioner," *Alabama News Magazine* 42/8 (August 1976): 10–11.

[98] Interview with Oliver.

[99] Interview with Nelson Tift Mitchell, 31 October 2003, and "Report on Sinking of *Parisima*, National Archives, R.S. No. 120965 81967, cited from copy in the Nelson Tift Mitchell Papers.

[100] Interview with Mitchell.

[101] Grice and Coulter, *Georgia Through Two Centuries*, 2: 288.

Chapter Seven

[1] W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Random House, 1941) 51. Ellison is quoted in Cobb, *Redefining Southern Culture*, 147.

[2] Ulrich B. Phillips, "The Central Theme of Southern History," in E. Merton Coulter, ed., *The Course of the South to Secession* (New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1939) 152.

[3] J. William Harris, *Deep Souths, Delta, Piedmont, and Sea Island Society in the Age of Segregation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) 264–91. See also David R. Goldfield, *Black, White, and Southern, Race Relations and Southern Culture, 1940 to the Present* (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana State University, 1990).

[4] Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind, Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998) xi, 197.

[5] Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race, Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) 511–13.

[6] See for instance John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New York: Doubleday, 1949) 250–66; Leonard Broom and Norval D. Glenn, *Transformation of the Negro American* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) 5, 22–23; Harris, *Deep Souths*, 126, 202, 208, 212–13; and John Blassingame's introduction in *Slave Testimony, Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1971) xlvi–lv.

[7] Melissa Walker, "Shifting Boundaries: Race Relations in the Rural Jim Crow South," in R. Douglas Hurt, ed., *African American Life in the Rural South, 1900–1950* (Columbia MO: University of Missouri Press, 2003) 90–92. See also Jack Temple Kirby, *Rural Worlds Lost* (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987).

[8] Charles S. Johnson, *Growing Up in the Black Belt* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967) 283.

[9] "Dougherty County Historical Address," *Journal of Southwest History*, 21.

[10] "At Rest," *Albany News and Advertiser*, 21 November 1891.

[11] Interview with Hodges; David Sherman to the author, 21 December 2005; and Susan E. O'Donovan, "Transforming Work: Slavery, Free Labor, and the Household in Southwest Georgia, 1850–1880," unpublished Ph. D. dissertation (University of California, San Diego, 1997) 511.

[12] Interviews with Hodges and Julia Smith Oliver.

[13] Interview with Virginia Brumby.

[14] Newspaper clipping from the *Tifton Gazette*, 1972, Porter Papers, and Interview with Catherine Tift Porter, 30 January 2004. An account of H. H. Tift's funeral notes that a "primary room" of the First Baptist Church in Tifton was "reserved for the old sawmill darkies, who loved 'Cap'n so well." "Tifton Today Mourns Death," 4 February 1922.

[15] "In All the South No Farms Like These," *Atlanta Journal*, 10 November 1912.

[16] Williams, *History of Tift County*, 179–80, 193.

[17] Tift Jones, "Thin Dusk," Orville Tift Papers, Agrirama, Tifton.

[18] Scrapbook of Katherine Tift-Jones, Porter Papers.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Bacon, *Albany on the Flint*, 104–105.

[21] Joseph Winthrop Holley, *You Can't Build a Chimney from the Top* (New York: William Frederick Press, 1948) xxiv, 44, 53–54. A similar spirit of cooperation is evident in the 1945 public remarks of Holley's successor, Aaron Brown: "Much of what the Negro has done in Albany, and most of what he will do, is definitely tied in with harmonious race relations. ...In this regard Albany is no worse than other places, but it is better than most." Lamar Clifton, *A First State Corporation Legacy* (Tallahassee FL: Rose Publishing Co., 1997) 276. Although it recognizes the prevalence of Albany State University's original white benefactor and trustees, Titus Brown's history of the institution credits Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois for Holley's inspiration and makes no mention of his efforts to cultivate the goodwill of the white community. Titus Brown, *Albany State University, A Centennial History: 1903–2003* (Charleston SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003) 8–15.

[22] "Negro Education in Albany," *Albany Daily Herald*, 1 March 1917, and Holley, *You Can't Build a Chimney* 199, 204, 208. The autographed copy is in the possession of David Sherman. Paul Keenan confirms that Holly had "good relations

with the white community" and "conducted his operations so as to not offend but to gain favor." Interview with Keenan.

[23] B. F. Cofer, "His Excellency, Mayor M. W. Tift," Newspaper clipping, David Sherman Papers.

[24] Interviews with David Sherman, 5 August 2005, Arlington, Virginia, and Nelson Tift Joyner, 9 August 2005, Reston, Virginia.

[25] Interviews with McGough and Robert Tift.

[26] Interviews with Mike Brumby, 12 March 2006, and William Lee Tift, 24 January 2006, Macon.

[27] Naomi to Henry and Christine Tift, 14 July 1981, Jerome Pound Tift Papers, and interview with Jerome Pound Tift, 27 April 2004, Macon.

[28] Interviews with Willie Mae Preston, 16 May 2004, Macon, and Carol Tift, 9 May 2004, Macon, and Willie Mae Preston to Henry and Christine Tift, n.d., Jerome Pound Tift Papers.

[29] Interviews with Catherine Tift Porter, 30 January and 26 March 2004, and 15 January 2006.

[30] Interview with Rev. Richard Winn, 13 August 2007, Atlanta.

[31] Interview with Tommy Tift, and "Dallas Smith, First Brokerage, Inc.," *The Atlanta Metro* (July 1989) 9-B.

[32] Interviews with Lutrelle Tift Rankin, 7 October 2003, Tifton, and Amos and Serita Tift.

[33] Interview with Clara Bell Tabor Johnson, 27 August 2007, Tifton. Clara's sentiments about the past are echoed by Eddie Bethel's comments on the social fabric of South Albany prior to the 1960s. "I just personally think that when we were coming up—being segregated—we had a lot. I think we had more when we were segregated than we have now—for the young people. ...Today, the kids got so much but they don't have nothing." Mary Sterner Lawson, *June Bug's Grocery and the Cornfield Jook, A South Albany History* (Charleston SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003) 43.

[34] Jack Currie, *Wings Over Georgia* (London: Goodall Publications, 1989) 53.

[35] Sherman to J. L. Pilcher, 2 July 1963, Pilcher Papers, IA/14.

[36] Interview with McGough.

[37] Interview with Hudgens and Tift to Russell, 14 August 1942, Russell Papers, VI/C/58/14.

[38] Interview with Hudgens. According to testimony by Police Chief Laurie Pritchett, however, the actual bond was posted by a "Negro male" sent by "a coalition...between some blacks and some whites" who felt that King's release would deactivate the crisis and discourage the news media from further coverage. Howell Raines, *My Soul Is Rested, Movement Days in the Deep South Remembered* (New York: Putnam, 1977) 362–63.

[39] Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize, America's Civil Rights Years, 1954–1965* (New York: Viking, 1987) 172, and *New Georgia Guide*, 513–14. See also accounts

by John A. Ricks III, "'De Lawd' Descends and Is Crucified: Martin Luther King, Jr. in Albany, Georgia," Clayborne Carson, "SNCC and the Albany Movement," and Stephen B. Oates, "The Albany Movement: A Chapter in the Life of Martin Luther King, Jr." in *The Journal of Southwest Georgia History* 2 (Fall 1984): 3–39.

[40] Pritchett to Pilcher, 14 June 1963, Pilcher Papers, 3/72, and interview with Hudgens.

[41] Interview with David Sherman, 5 August 2005, Arlington, Virginia.

[42] Interview with Sue McGough, and "A Homegoing Service Celebrating the Life of Mrs. Robbie Lee Watkins-Lowe," Sue McGough Papers.

[43] Interviews with Ona Gilbert and Sue Lyons, 14 March 2006, Loxley, Alabama.

[44] Interview with Mary Frances Dixon, 4 September 2007, Cincinnati, Ohio.

[45] Interview with Lucille Fagin, 21 September 2007, Atlanta.

[46] Interviews with Julia Smith Oliver and with Edward Banks Oliver, 9 July 2006, Dadeville, Alabama.

[47] Interviews with Sue Hine and Virginia Winfield Joyner, 19 June 2005, and Nelson Tift Joyner.

[48] Interview with Nelson Tift Mitchell.

[49] Interview with C. B. Pritchett, 23 May 2003, Albany, Georgia, and Kay Randle, "Memories of a War," *Albany Magazine* 6/1 (February 2000): 33. Paul Keenan concurs that "he's wise not to talk about race. I think Bunny realizes he was a little too strong on the subject. He took the Confederate flag a little too far." Interview with Keenan.

[50] Interviews with Robert Tift and Sue McGough.

[51] Interview with Bee McCormack. "He had the roving hand if he just said hello to you," says acquaintance Anne Stokes. Interview with Anne Stokes, 7 October 2007, Albany. Another source, referring to Pritchett's visit to New York in 1949, used the phrase "lock up your widows and daughters, boys, Bunny's in town." Clifton, *A First State Corporation Legacy*, 201.

[52] Interviews with Gil Barrett, 12 May 2006, Albany, and C. B. Pritchett.

[53] Interview with Jack Finley Hall, 12 May 2006, Albany; Clifton, *First State Corporation Legacy*, 138; and David Sherman to the author, 21 December 2005, letter in the author's possession.

[54] Interviews with Jack and Wilhelmina Hall, 12 May 2006, Albany. David Sherman remembers two distinguished black men who attended Maurice Wheeler's funeral service in 1961 with their last names being Tift. Interview with David Sherman.

[55] Thomas K. Nakayama and Judith N. Martin, *Whiteness, The Communication of Social Identity* (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 1999) xiii; Karyn D. McKinney, *Being White, Stories of Race and Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2005) 17; Mia Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind, African-American Ideas about White People, 1830–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 7; and

Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness, The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (New York: Random House, 1999) xii.

[56] Shannon Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness, The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2006) 1, 9, 21, 23, 64.

[57] W. E. B. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Books, 1984) 296. Possibly the earliest whiteness study is DuBois's pre-Freudian essay, "The Souls of White Folk" in *Darkwater, Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[58] Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery in Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1999) 159. To DuBois, however, Washington's so-called "Atlanta Compromise" represented "the old attitude of adjustment and submission," a program that "practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races." DuBois, *Souls of Black Folks*, 246.

[59] Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 6, 74, 92, 97, 148.

[60] Susan E. O'Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007) 2. An analysis of the 312 interviews conducted in the 1930s under the New Deal Federal Writers Project and later published by George P. Renwick shows that 172 (54.9%) of former Georgia slaves expressed a positive regard for their former masters and/or mistresses, and only twenty-nine (9.3%) responded negatively. These quantitative measures compare favorably with an index of the narratives compiled by Donald Jacobs. On the critical question of former slave attitudes towards masters, 118 (81%) of the Georgians responded positively and only 27 (19%) were negative. Most striking is that 38 (56.7%) had a positive attitude towards slavery. See George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave, A Composite Autobiography*, 41 vols. (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1972, 1977, and 1979) and Donald Jacobs, *Index to The American Slave* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1981). For an earlier perspective see Paul D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered, A Record of Twentieth-Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) 11, 28.

[61] O'Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*, 107, 238–39, 266.

[62] Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything, White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945–1975* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006) 61, 44, 69.

[63] Hamilton Jordan, *No Such Thing As A Bad Day* (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 2001) 94, 99.

[64] Formwalt to the author, 30 April 2007, letter in possession of the author.

[65] Jimmy Carter, *An Hour Before Daylight, Memories of a Rural Boyhood* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001) 53, 73–76, 185–86, and Sherman to the author, 28 November 2007, letter in author's possession. For other examples of interracial bonding, see Toni Veverka, *Scars of Civilization, A Progress-Sketch Biography of Walter Colquitt Sherman* (Montgomery AL: Paragon Press, 1957) 7–17; Darden Asbury Pyron, *Southern Daughter, The Life of Margaret Mitchell* (New

York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 38–39, 97, 414–16; and Bertie Bowman, *Step by Step, A Memoir of Hope, Friendship, Perseverance and Living the American Dream* (New York: Random House, 2008).

[66] Jackman, *The Velvet Glove,* 2, 11, 29–32, 60–61, 73. See also Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 768.

[67] Jackman, *The Velvet Glove*, 74, 80–82.

[68] An example is provided by Mary Sterner Lawson's oral history of white grocery store owner Pete Moulton, who catered to the needs of blacks in South Albany for several decades. "He was just like one of the nicest people I have known," notes Anne Jean Williams Lowe, "because he was good to the black community." According to Elizabeth Allen, "he was a nice man. He took a lot of time with black folks. Everybody was crazy about him. You could go to the grocery store and take up grocery and wait until we get paid to pay him." John Lee concurs that "most people around there, they really, really, they really loved Mr. Pete." To Dorothy Jenkins, he was "a very accommodating person. He was, he really was. And, oh he just took so many people under his wing and helped them out cause they was poor and didn't have nothing." Moulton even on occasion secured release for his patrons from jail, and when some other white-owned businesses were being torched during Albany's racial strife of the 1960s, his store survived. Lawson, *June Bug's Grocery*, 66–67, 69, 77, 89–90, 124–25. Much the same kind of interracial amity is evident in the account of Anne Churchwell Stokes, whose father owned a chain of department stores in Albany and was always generous in a paternalistic way to the black community. Anne's black nanny, Lizzie Mae or Mae Mae, "practically raised me" and stayed until the birth of Anne's youngest child. "She would sit there on the piano stool and made sure I practiced and would tell me not to come out of my room unless I could smile at someone. She would wipe my mouth out with soap if I used bad grammar or foul language. And when we went on trips, Mae Mae would always go with me on the train. She always referred to me as her 'baby this and that.' I was closer to her than I was to my mother." But the color line was always there, sometimes at the instance of the servant. "Mae Mae made me eat in the dining room while she ate in the kitchen with my child." Later, when Mae Mae got older, Anne and her husband helped take care of her, especially when her home was destroyed in the great flood of 1993, and Anne was asked to speak at her funeral. As a result of good relations with the black community, Anne believes, there was no boycott or destruction of her family's businesses during the Albany movement. Interview with Anne Stokes, 7 October 2007.

[69] See Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Volume One: Racial Oppression and Social Control* (New York: Verso, 1994) 9, and Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1965).

[70] Randall M. Miller, *"Dear Master," Letters of a Slave Family* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) 23, and James L. Roark, *Masters Without Slaves, Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Norton, 1977) xi.

Chapter Eight

[1] Ralph McGill, *The South and the Southerner* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992) 218.

[2] Hart, *The Southern South*, 49.

[3] Interviews with Mike and Margaret Brumby, 12 March 2006, Tifton.

[4] Ibid.

[5] "Teacher 'Tapping,'" *Tifton Magazine* (Spring 2003): 23.

[6] Flyer entitled "Tift County Foundation for Educational Excellence" in the author's possession and Ed Lightsey, "The Reading Capital," *Georgia Trend* 15/11 (July 2000): 120–21.

[7] Steve Lopez, "Cat in the Hat and All That," *Time* 156/17 (23 October 2000): 6.

[8] "Tift County Foundation" flyer, bookmark entitled "Reading Capital of the World!" in the author's possession; Chris Beckham, "Readers hit two million mark," *The Tifton Gazette*, 10 January 2004; and interview with Paul Johnson, 25 May 2006, Tifton.

[9] Interview with Ann Tift.

[10] Ibid. and interview with Carol Tift.

[11] Interview with William Tift.

[12] Interviews with Jerome and Carol Tift.

[13] Interview with Thomas Nelson Tift, 26 April 2006, Boca Raton, Florida.

[14] Interviews with Catherine Tift Porter, 15 January 2006, and 26 March 2004.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Interview with Tommy Tift.

[17] Tifts who served on the Tift College Board included: Amos Chapman Tift (1913–1921, 1923–1933, and 1935–1938), Bessie Tift (1921–1936); Thomas W. Tift (1939–1942), and Thomas W. Tift, Jr. (1974–1978 and 1980–1984). Michelle B. Arnold, "Index of Tift College Trustees," Mercer University Special Collections, Macon.

[18] Interview with Tommy Tift; Evelyn York Joiner, "Tift College, A Backward Glance," *Tift College Alumna Directory, 1982* (White Plains NY: Harris Publishing Co. 1982) ix; and interview with Thomas Nelson Tift.

[19] "Tift Grads Endorse Closing," *Savannah Evening Press*, 18 March 1987.

[20] Interviews with Katie Blackburn, 3 May 2004, Macon, and Erin Lones, 9 August 2004, Macon.

[21] Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1398, and interviews with Lutrelle Tift Rankin II, 25 May 2006, and John Johnson, 22 June 2006, Tifton.

[22] Interview with Lutrelle Tift Rankin II and Lutrelle Tift Rankin, 7 October 2003.

[23] Interview with Amos Chapman Tift III.

[24] Interviews with Lutrelle Tift Rankin, Amos Chapman Tift III, and Dathan Tift, 13 August 2006.

[25] Marguerite Myers Miller, "Growing Up in the Myon," *Tifton Magazine* (November–December 1990): 12–14, and *Daily Tifton Gazette*, 26 September 1972.

[26] "Col. Henry T. Myers, 61, Dies," *New York Times*, 10 December 1968.

[27] "Henry Myers, Presidents' Pilot," *Washington Post*, 10 December 1968. Myers's career also entailed lengthy absences from home and easy access to glamorous women. "Henry loved women—lots of them," according to his biographer, which eventually led to a dissolution of his marriage. Bonne Davis Cella, *Fixing the Moon* (Macon: Henchard Press, 2005) 59.

[28] Russell to James Nelson, 25 March 1944, Henry Tift Myers Papers, uncatalogued, University of Georgia Library and *New York Times*, 10 December 1968. See also the *Congressional Record* 89 (30 September 1943): 8013.

[29] Newspaper clippings in the Jerome Pound Tift scrapbook, Jerome Tift Papers.

[30] Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1399–1402, and interview with Frederick Herr Jones III, 16 June 2006, Charlestown, Indiana.

[31] Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1409, and Interview with Betty Skinner, 13 December 2004, Ponte Vedra, Florida.

[32] Lucian Lamar Knight, *Georgia's Landmarks, Memorials, and Legends*, 2 vols. (Atlanta: Byrd Printing Co., 1913) 1:727, and "Ancestral Register, Sarah Elizabeth Bacon Skinner," Betty Skinner Papers.

[33] "Tift-Bacon," *Tifton Gazette*, 15 April 1910, interview with Betty Skinner, and letter from Betty Skinner to the author, 7 January 2006.

[34] Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1410–11, and interview with Betty Skinner.

[35] Betty Skinner to the author, 4 April and 6 May 2006, letters held by author.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Interview with Jeanette Vandiviere Tift, 19 March 2001.

[38] Typescript entitled "Properties located at 319–327 North Washington Street, 'Sandy Bottom,' Albany, Georgia," David Sherman Papers.

[39] Ibid. and Sherman to Tommy Chatmon, 6 February 2004, Sherman Papers.

[40] Mercer-Perryman-Jones-Sherman Family Typescript, David Sherman Papers, and Interview with John Sherman, 11 August 2004, Albany.

[41] Interview with Susan McGough.

[42] Interviews with Ona McGough Gilbert and Susan McGough, and letter from Jeff Gilbert, 3 April 2006, in the author's possession.

[43] Interview with Susan McGough.

[44] Ibid. On the exploits of Red Eagle, see Benjamin W. Griffith, *McIntosh and Weatherford, Creek Indian Leaders* (Tuscaloosa AL: University of Alabama Press, 1988).

[45] Interview with Robert Tift.

[46] Interview with Nelson Tift Joyner, Jr.

[47] Interview with Susan Joyner Hine.

[48] Interview with Virginia Joyner Ewald.

[49] Interview with Lyons. Sue's husband Mark also had Yankee roots. His great-grandparents, Michael and Rachael Lyons, moved from New York to Escambia County, Alabama, where Michael entered the lumber business and served in the Confederate army. Their older son, Joseph Henry Lyons became an attorney in Mobile, and was appointed Collector of Customs at the Port of Mobile by President Woodrow Wilson in 1918. He served an unprecedented six terms. Mark's uncle, Sage Lyons, had a brief but illustrious career in Alabama politics. As a young attorney in Mobile, he served as county coordinator for Lurleen Wallace's successful 1966 campaign for governor, then worked extensively for George Wallace in his bid for the presidency in 1968 and his re-election as governor in 1970. Meanwhile Lyons was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 1969, and in 1971, despite having only served a half term, Sage, through Wallace's influence, was elected Speaker of the House, one of the most powerful positions in state government. Although he only served till 1975, Lyons remained a key political figure through the 1970s. As Sue McGough observed, "it probably didn't hurt Julia Oliver's chances in gaining a position in the Wallace cabinet that Sage Lyons was brother-in-law of Julia's niece." Lyons Surname File, Alabama Department of Archives and History, and "Collector Lyons Soon Will Begin His Fifth Term," *Mobile Register*, 9 September 1945; "Veteran Collector of Customs Turns Back Time's Pages," *Port of Mobile News and Shippers' Guide* 15 (December 1941): 1; "Mark Lyons Sr.," *Mobile Register*, 9 September 1960; "Mobile Man One of Top Contenders for Docks Director," *Birmingham News*, 7 June 1970; Milo Dakin, "Lyons House Speaker," *Montgomery Advertiser*, 13 January 1971; and Interview with McGough.

[50] Interview with Aimee Hodges, and Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1432.

[51] Interviews with Julia Oliver; and Edward and William Oliver, 9 July 2006, Dadeville, Alabama.

[52] Interviews with Nelson and Majorie Mitchell.

[53] Interview with C. B. Pritchett, Jr.

[54] Ibid. and Burrows, *Robert Burrows and Descendants*, 2: 1449–51.

[55] Interview with Susan Hine and Reed, *Southerners*, 27–43.

Conclusion

[1] Grice and Coulter, *Georgia Through Two Centuries*, 2: 288.

[2] Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, 1: 578 and 579, and United States Census Bureau, *County and City Data Book: 2000* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2001) 799, 802. Randy Southerland, "Better Times, In Southwest Georgia, The Mood Is Upbeat," *Georgia Trend* 21/8 (April 2006): 64–70.

[3] Stephens, "Albany, 1836–1950," 40.

[4] Thomason, *Raising Cane*; 50, 59. See also Beth Abney, "Pecans, Georgia's Million Dollar Crop," *Georgia Journal* 1/1 (November 1980): 6, and Albany Chamber of Commerce, "A Brief History of Albany, Georgia" (1986) 2, cited by Thomason, 59.

[5] Southerland, "Better Times," 64–66.

[6] Interviews with Gil Barrett and Bee McCormack. Much the same perspective emerges from black funeral home director James Griffin, who nostalgically observes that "prior to 1946 you could not look in Albany and say that this was an all-black or an all-white neighborhood, because blacks and whites all lived together. They lived close in proximity." Lawson, *June Bug's Grocery*, 40.

[7] Interview with Willie Adams, Jr., 17 April 2006, Albany.

[8] *Albany Herald*, 4 March 1973.

[9] Interviews with Tommy Gregors, 12 May 2006, and Willie Adams, and Randle, "Memories of a War," 35.

[10] Mary and Ben Lawson, who taught English for over three decades at Albany State University, agree that "things have changed and have gotten better. Yet there is still an undercurrent of racism, and the black community doesn't like it if blacks do white things, like be on boards or go to white churches." As white immigrants from Ohio, the Lawsons felt the sting of racial bias in several dimensions. "We were triple pariahs," recalls Ben, "White to the Blacks, Yankee, and Black to the Whites." Interview with Mary and Ben Lawson, 5 October 2007, Tallahassee, Florida.

[11] Interview with Gregors.

[12] Caldwell, *Courthouse and Depot*, 271, and *Tifton Gazette*, Progressive Edition, 1989.

[13] *Operation Surge in Tift County, Georgia* (Tifton GA: privately printed, 1974) 5, and Cynthia Langenfeld, "Million-Dollar Vegetables," *Georgia Life* 2 (Summer 1975): 18–19.

[14] "It is a law of economic history," notes William H. Nicholls, "that economic progress, broadly viewed, is associated with a decline in the relative importance of agriculture," in *Southern Tradition and Regional Progress* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960) 41. See also I. A. Newby, *The South: A History* (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1978).

[15] Interviews with Virginia Brumby and Paul Johnson.

[16] Ed Lightsey, "A New Shell Game," *Georgia Trend* 20/5 (January 2005): 94; Gerard Krewer, "Tifton's World Famous Fruit Crop," and T. Brian Tankersley, "Tift County Peanut Production," in *The Heritage of Tift County, Georgia, 1905–*

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[17] *Georgia Trend* 20 (January 2005): 85–87; Danny Carter, "The History of I-75 Starts in Tifton," in *Heritage of Tift County*, 6, and interviews with Paul Johnson and Amos Chapman Tift III.

[18] Julie Smith, "The History of Downtown Tifton," in *Heritage of Tift County*, 4–5.

[19] Lightsey, "Road to Success," *Georgia Trend* 20/5 (January 2005): 88–89, and interview with Johnson.

[20] Beckham, "Tifton's Charm Draws Tourists"; "Georgia Agrirama—History and Purpose," Tifton File, Georgia Historical Society; and interview with John Johnson.

[21] Interviews with John Johnson and Paul Johnson.

[22] Interview with Serita Tift, 21 June 2006, Tifton; JD Sumner, "Gang-related graffiti spreads in Tifton," *Tifton Gazette*, 17 June 2006, and "Tifton's 'Moving' Statue," *Tifton Magazine* (Fall 2002): 6–7.

[23] Andrews, "On Some Early Aspects of Connecticut History," 4, 20.

[24] Don H. Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860–1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990) xv, and Nelson Tift, "To the People of Baker County," *Albany Patriot*, 29 September 1847.

[25] "African Slavery," ibid., 26 April 1850, and Woodward, *Burden of Southern History*, 12.

[26] "Letter from Hon. Nelson Tift," *Albany News*, 21 June 1870.

[27] Caldwell, *Courthouse and Depot*, 269, and interview with Johnson.

[28] Caldwell, *Courthouse and Depot*, 179.

[29] Grice and Coulter, *Georgia Through Two Centuries*, 2: 288.

[30] Frank Sayles, Jr., "An 'Idea Guy' Who Loves a Challenge," *TiftonScene Magazine* 1 (February–March 2006): 36.

[31] See *Manderlay* at www.manderlaythefilm.com, and Gilbert to the author, 3 April 2006, letter in the author's possession.

[32] According to William Nicholls, the Southern upper classes equated "'family,' 'breeding,' and 'blood-lines'" with biological superiority. Nicholls, *Southern Tradition*, 104.

[33] Galloway, *The Inman Family*, 68, and Doyle, *New Men*, xiv.

[34] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 65, and Jones, "Thin Dusk," Orville Tift Papers.

[35] Interview with Sue McGough, and Caldwell, *Courthouse and Depot*, 394.

[36] Cobb, *Redefining Southern Culture*, 208–209.

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